

THE STORY OF JONAH



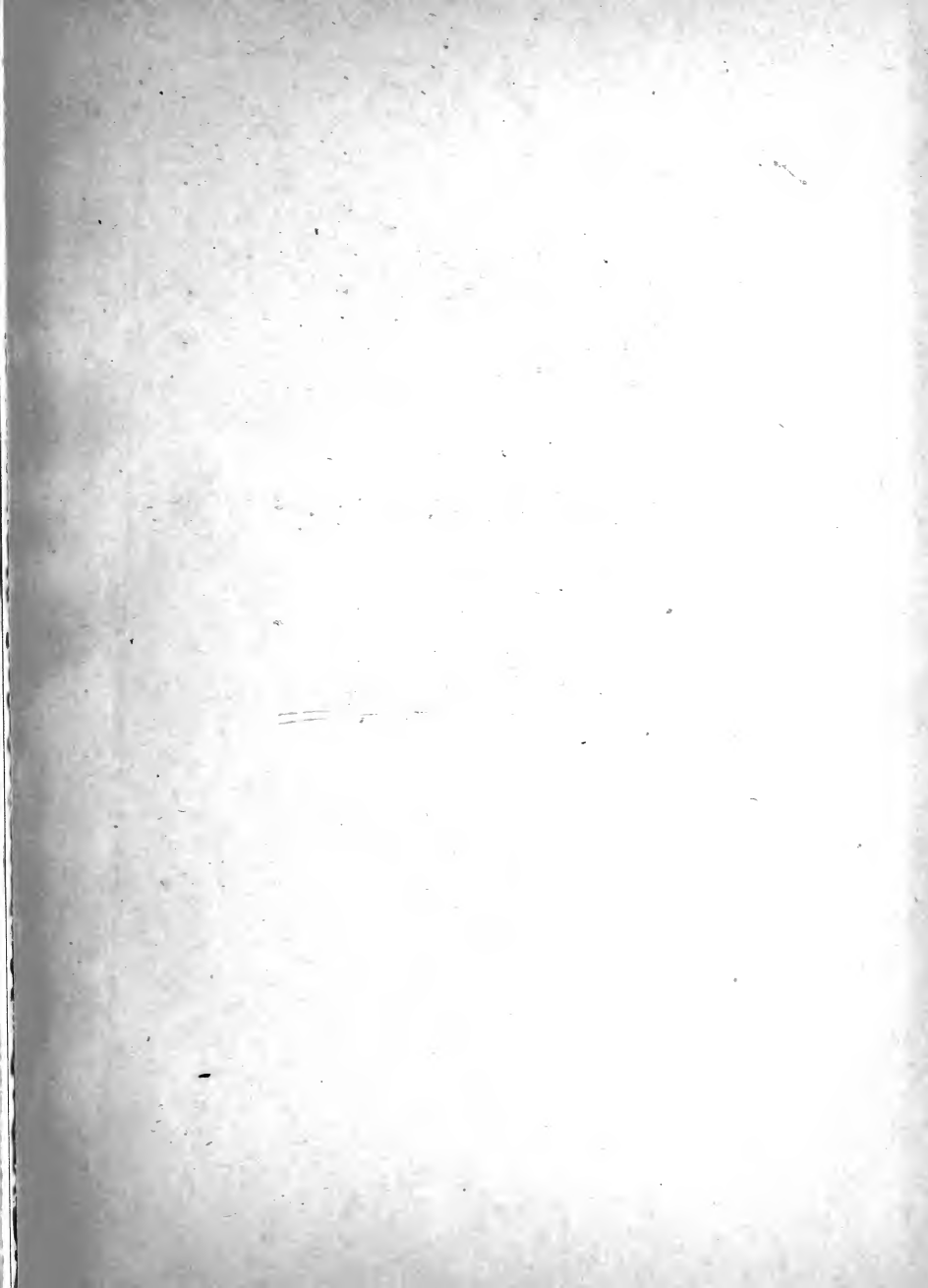
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

BS1605

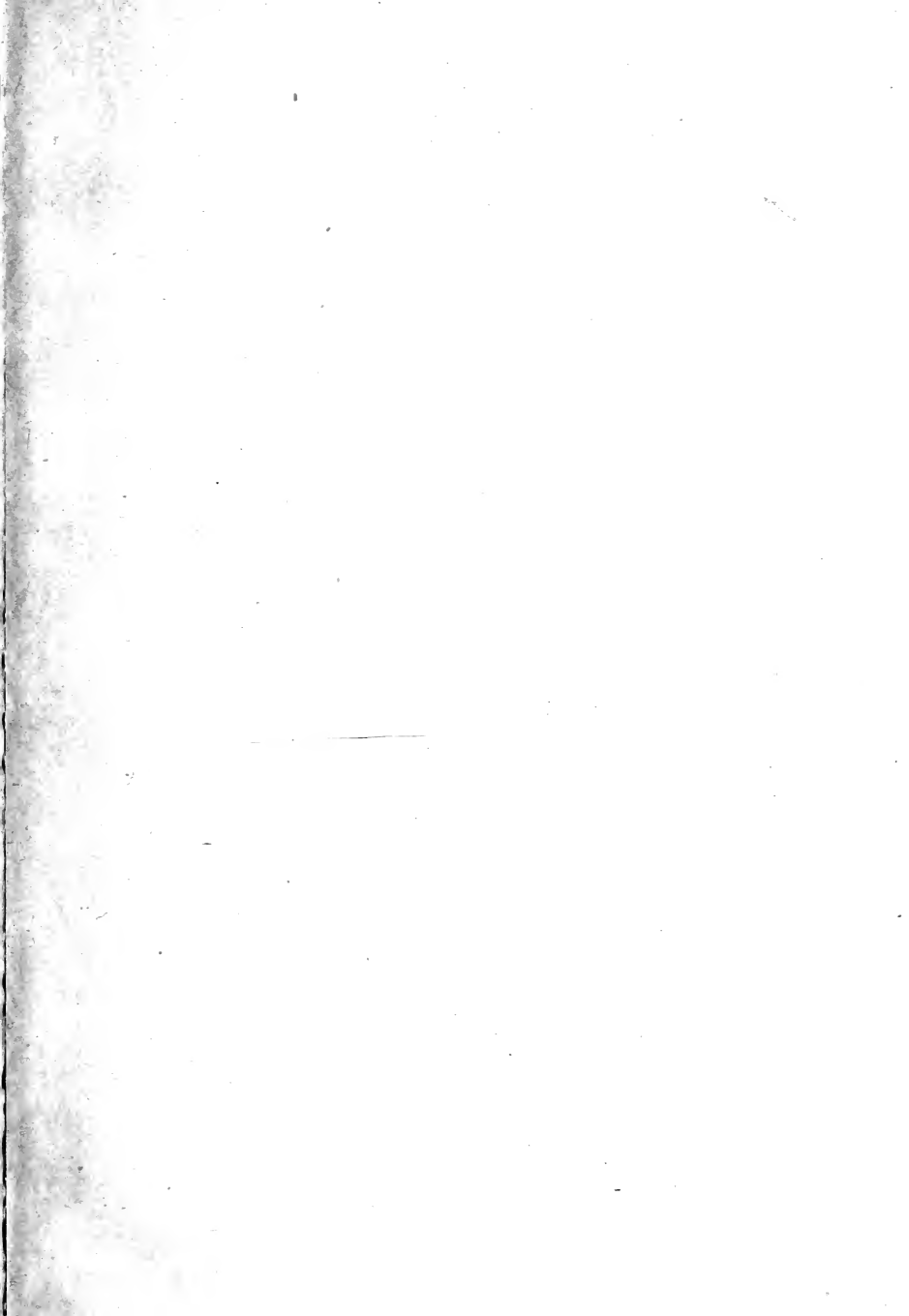
Chap. Copyright No.

Shelf. V3

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.









JONAH PREACHING TO THE NINEVITES.

THE
STORY OF JONAH:

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF

THE SWALLOWING BY SEA MONSTERS
OF MEN AND QUADRUPEDS

AND THE

TESTIMONY OF SACRED AND PROFANE HISTORY

AND OF THE

NINEVITE MONUMENTS

TO THE

REALITY OF THE OCCURRENCES

DESCRIBED IN THE

BOOK OF JONAH

EDITED BY ✓

GEORGE J. VARNEY

BOSTON

THE CHRISTIAN WITNESS COMPANY

1897

JUN 19 1897
26036-021

BS 1605

.V3

COPYRIGHT, 1897,
BY THE CHRISTIAN WITNESS COMPANY.

C. J. PETERS & SON, TYPOGRAPHERS, BOSTON.

SKINNER, BARTLETT, & CO., PRINTERS.

PREFACE.

AN eminent clergyman said, not long ago, in a public address, "The Book of Jonah is only a picture with a beautiful lesson."

It has indeed a lesson, "beautiful" to all persons of benevolent disposition; but if the book be regarded as merely a literary invention of some ancient scribe, semi-civilized and of limited knowledge, designed to inculcate religious doctrines that were somewhat peculiar in his period, it will lack the requisite authority. Consequently it would have little or no force with many persons more or less conversant with the Bible, who entertain various opinions in regard to the correctness of its teachings, and hold it no more in regard than they do some other literature which has never been reckoned among sacred writings. If, on the other hand, the book is historically true, if it be the record of real occurrences, then it presents vividly an unusually intelligible passage in the course of the divine government of the world, and does indeed possess authority, and will have an influence far beyond what is possible

to a nature-myth, an allegory, or a fable. When accepted as genuine history, it cannot fail of being heeded by all intelligent people; since back of it will be apprehended, in a larger degree, the power and will of the Almighty.

The Lord Jesus took the events in Jewish history as they were understood by the Jews of his day, — a method which best served for the inculcation of the truth he had to communicate. As to the story of Jonah, he gave it, as a whole, his *implied* sanction at least.

The belief of the compiler of this volume is that the action in that story was real, and, consequently, providential; and that its record was divinely inspired.

An excellent statement of the proper intellectual attitude toward the biblical records in their relation to the dictum of science is reported to have been made recently by Rev. Lyman Abbott, as follows:—

“In my judgment our hypotheses must always be conformed to the attested facts; we must not determine whether we will accept the evidence as to facts by considering whether they agree with our preconceived hypotheses. If I were convinced, for instance, that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not consistent with the doctrine of evolution, I should be compelled to abandon or modify that doctrine; I should not abandon my belief in the resurrection. That resurrection I regard as a *fact*; evolution as a theory — on the whole, the best theory of ‘God’s way

of doing things' yet proposed by philosophic thinkers — the latest word and the best word of science, but not necessarily its last or final word."

In the Introduction of this volume I have chiefly cited the early theologians and commentators, because they first stated the theories which the doctors of the present period have set forth with little or no modification.

As my purpose in offering a contribution to the discussion on the subject of this book is the establishment of the truth, it has appeared to me that I should furnish the best material possible, without showing partiality to my own utterances; accordingly, finding two such articles available, I have given them, and also several brief extracts from other writers, what appear to be their suitable positions in this volume.

Boston, *May 1, 1897.*



CONTENTS.

PART I.

INTRODUCTION :—	PAGE
IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROPHET	13
PERIOD OF COMPOSITION	15
JONAH IN NINEVEH	17
TESTIMONY OF THE NINEVITE MONUMENTS	18

PART II.

A STUDY OF JONAH	25
By the late CHARLES READE, D.C.L.	

PART III.

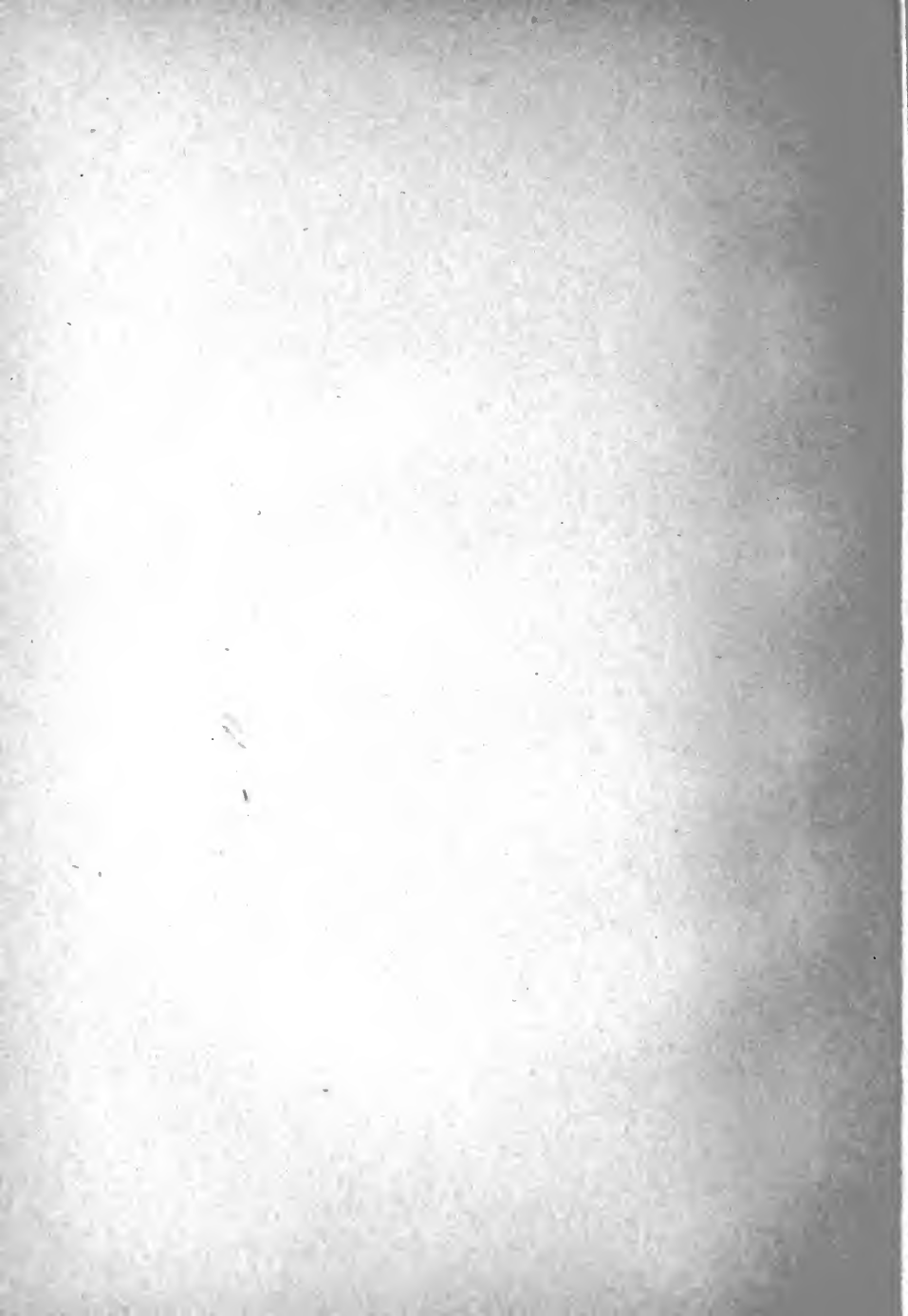
THE BOOK OF JONAH	47
-----------------------------	----

PART IV.

JONAH AND THE SEA-MONSTER	59
By GEORGE J. VARNEY.	

PART V.

JONAH IN NINEVEH	83
By H. CLAY TRUMBULL, D.D.	



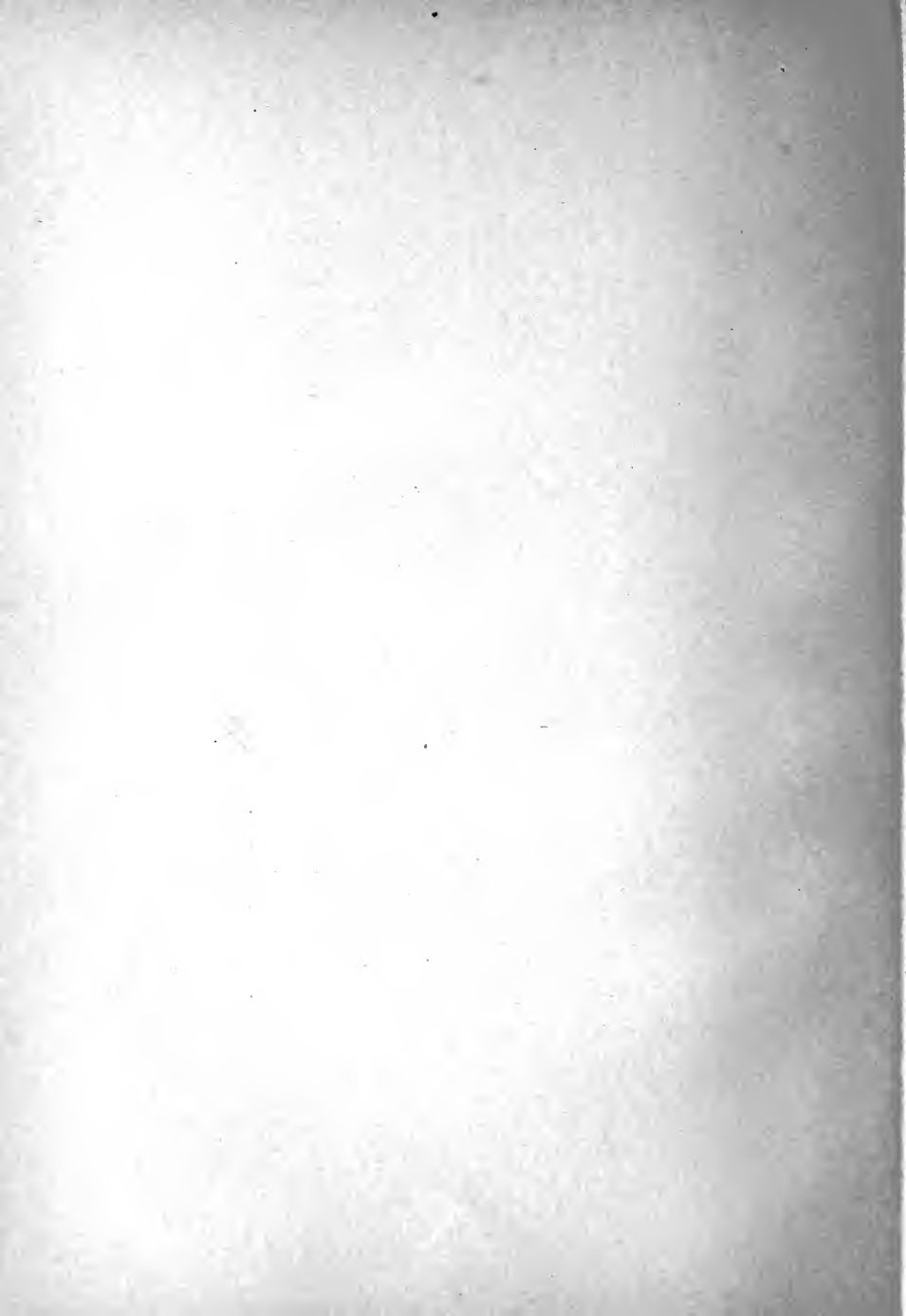
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

JONAH PREACHING TO THE NINEVITES	Frontispiece
<i>(From Cassell's Illustrated Family Bible, London.)</i>	
MAP OF CHALDEA AND NINEVEH	16
SCULPTURED WALL AT KOUYUNJIK	19
<i>Excavated by M. BOTTA, 1842, 1843. (From BONOMI'S "Nineveh and Its Palaces.")</i>	
JONAH CAST INTO THE SEA	29
<i>(From Cassell's Illustrated Family Bible.)</i>	
ANGLE OF PALACE COURT, KHORSABAD	46
<i>Excavated by M. BOTTA. (From FERGUSSON'S "The Palaces of Nineveh and Persepolis.")</i>	
JONAH SITTING IN HIS BOOTH	55
<i>(From Cassell's Illustrated Family Bible.)</i>	
THE HUMPBACK WHALE	64
A SPERM WHALE FIGHTING HIS CAPTORS	66
<i>(From "Observations on the Sperm Whale," etc., by THOMAS BEALE, London.)</i>	
A SPERM WHALE FEEDING	72
SUB-DEITIES OF THE CHALDEANS	83
<i>Copy of intaglio exhumed at Nineveh. (From MASPERO'S "Dawn of Civilization," Paris, 1895.)</i>	

	PAGE
BROKEN FIGURE OF MAN-FISH	87
<i>From Ninevite Seal. (MASPERO.)</i>	
THE "DAGON" OF SCRIPTURE	88
<i>(One of a group, of which the walls of the Palace of Khorsabad had an extensive series. (BONOMI.)</i>	
TWO MAN-FISH PRIESTS	91
<i>Occupying a middle section of a bronze plaque from an Assyrian excavation. (MASPERO.)</i>	
A GOD-FISH. (OANNES)	93
<i>From an Assyrian bas-relief. (MASPERO.)</i>	

PART I.

INTRODUCTION.



INTRODUCTION.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROPHET.

“THE Prophet Jonah,” says Dr. Pusey,* “who was at once the author and, in part, the subject of the book that bears his name, is beyond question the same who is related in the Book of Kings to have been God’s messenger of comfort to Israel in the reign of Jeroboam II.† For his own name (in English, Dove), as well as that of his father, Amittai (The Truth of God), occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament; and it is wholly improbable that there should have been two prophets of the same name, sons of fathers by the same name, when the names of both son and father were so rare as not to occur elsewhere in the Old Testament. The place which the prophet occupies among the twelve agrees therewith. For Hosea and Amos (prophets who are known to have prophesied in the time of Jeroboam and Joel, who prophesied before Amos)

* The late Rev. E. B. Pusey, D.D., Regius Professor of Hebrew, and canon of Christ Church, Oxford, England.

† 2 Kings xiv. 25.

are placed before him; Micah (who prophesied after the death of Jeroboam and Uzziah) is placed after him.

.

“He (Jonah) was then a prophet of Israel, born at Gath-hepher, a small village of Zebulun, which lies, St. Jerome says, ‘two miles from Sepphorim, which is now called Diocæsarea, in the way to Tiberias, where his tomb is also pointed out.’ His tomb was still shown in the hills near Sepphorim in the twelfth century, as Benjamin of Tudela relates. At the same place, ‘on a rocky hill two miles east of Sepphuriah,’ is still pointed out the tomb of the Prophet, and ‘Moslems and the Christians of Nazareth alike regard the village (el Meshhad) as his native village. The tomb is even now venerated by the Moslem inhabitants.”*

.

Some hold (among them Dr. Pusey) that the Book of Jonah may have been the work of the Prophet himself, writing in the third person, as did certain others of the

* Various spots have been pointed out on surmise as the place of Jonah’s sepulture, such as Gath-hepher in Palestine, and the Mound of Nebbi Yunas (in the southern section of Nineveh, and within the walls), on which are the ruins of an early Christian church, which has been sketched by enthusiastic *dilettante* archæologists to serve as the tomb of the Prophet; while the so-called Epiphanius speaks of Jonah’s retiring to Tyre, and being buried there in the tomb of Cenezæus, judge of Israel. This author has a life of Jonah, — “De Vitis Prophet.”

prophets at times, — observable in their books. The theories of most of the authorities (next following) preclude the composition of the book by the prophet whose experience it relates.

PERIOD OF COMPOSITION.

Gesenius and Ewald placed the composition of the Book of Jonah at a time when prophecy had long ceased; Ewald (partly on account of its miracles) putting it in the fifth century B.C.; and Hitzig, with his wonted wilfulness and insulatedness of criticism, builds a theory that the book is of Egyptian origin, — on his own mistake that the *kikaion* (this gourd) grew only in Egypt, — and placed it in the second century B.C., the time of the Maccabees. The interval between these periods is also filled up. One commentator (Goldhorn) places the Book of Jonah in the time of Sennacherib, that is, contemporaneous with Hezekiah; another (Rosenmüller) under Josiah; another (De Wette) before the Captivity, after the destruction of Nineveh by Cyaxares; a seventh (Bertholdt) lays chief stress on the argument that the destruction of Nineveh is not mentioned in it; an eighth (Jahn) prefers the period after the return from the Captivity to its close; a ninth (Maurer) doubted not, from its argument and purpose, that it was written before the order of prophets ceased; while others (among whom are Gesenius and Ewald) of the



same school are as positive from its arguments and contents that it must have been written after that order was closed.*

JONAH IN NINEVEH.

“This is perhaps . . . the explanation how (seeing its circumference was three days’ journey) Jonah entered ‘a day’s journey’ in the city, and at the close of the period we find him at the east side of the city, the opposite to that at which he had entered.

“His preaching seems to have lasted only this one day. He went, we are told, *one day’s journey into the city*. The one hundred and fifty stadia—nearly nineteen miles (which is the measure from side to side of Nineveh and its environs)—conforms nearly to the ancient Jewish reckoning of a day’s journey; so that Jonah walked through from end to end, repeating that one cry which God had commanded him. We seem to see the solitary figure of the Prophet, clothed in that one rough garment of hair-cloth, uttering that cry which we almost hear, echoing in street after street, ‘*Od arbaim youm re-nineveh nepācheth*’ (Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown). The words which the story declares him to have cried belong to that day only. For on that one

* Dr. Pusey: “Introduction to the Book of Jonah.”

day only was there still a respite of *forty days*. In one day the grace of God prevailed !” *

In support of the statement of this astounding result, the mythology (or religion) of the Ninevites becomes a subject of much interest.†

Many of us have wondered what the prophet did on the other thirty-nine days ; people have imagined the prophet preaching as moderns would, or telling them his own wondrous story of his desertion of God, his miraculous punishment, and, on his repentance, his miraculous deliverance. In Jonah’s story there is nothing of this. The one point brought out is the conversion of the Ninevites. This he dwells on in circumstantial details.

TESTIMONY OF THE NINEVITE MONUMENTS.

As with the story of Jonah at the present time, so was it with parts of the Prophet Isaiah until the period since the explorations in Assyria, and the excavation of the ruins of its ancient cities.

The tenth chapter of Isaiah has always been difficult to understand. Commentators were actually reduced to the extremity of supposing the graphic and lifelike account in this chapter as at least an ideal one. Sceptical

* Dr. Pusey.

† See closing article in this book respecting investigations of Ninevite ruins.



SCULPTURED WALL AT KOUYUNJIK.

criticism stigmatized it as a history of events that never happened. Professor Sayce* has pointed out that the record on the Ninevite monuments of his campaign in the conquest of Judea, chiselled in the stone under the direction of the conqueror himself, the mighty Sargon (the father of Sennacherib, King of Assyria), makes clear certain of the prophecies of Isaiah, this tenth chapter especially.

On the banks of the Tigris in Assyria (Sargon's august home) have lain for twenty-four centuries several large mounds, the heaped ruins of ancient cities. On this river, at the modern village of Kouyunjik, near Mosul, are the ruins of Nineveh, which have been carefully explored by Sir Austin Henry Layard. A little farther to the north, near the modern Khorsabad, is the site of the city of Sargon. The explorations were begun here by M. Botta, and were followed by those of M. Place (1851), assisted by M. Felix Thomas; and they have resulted in a complete success. Other explorations have since been prosecuted at this place and in Mesopotamia, by Rawlinson, Russam, Loftus, and George Smith. So vast is the number of the inscribed tablets and cylinders unearthed that many remained long unread, not from their being undecipherable or unintelligible, but because

* A. H. Sayce, professor of Assyriology, University of Oxford, England.

of insufficient time for the few Assyrian scholars to perform this work. Their contents have been largely given to us recently by Professor Sayce.

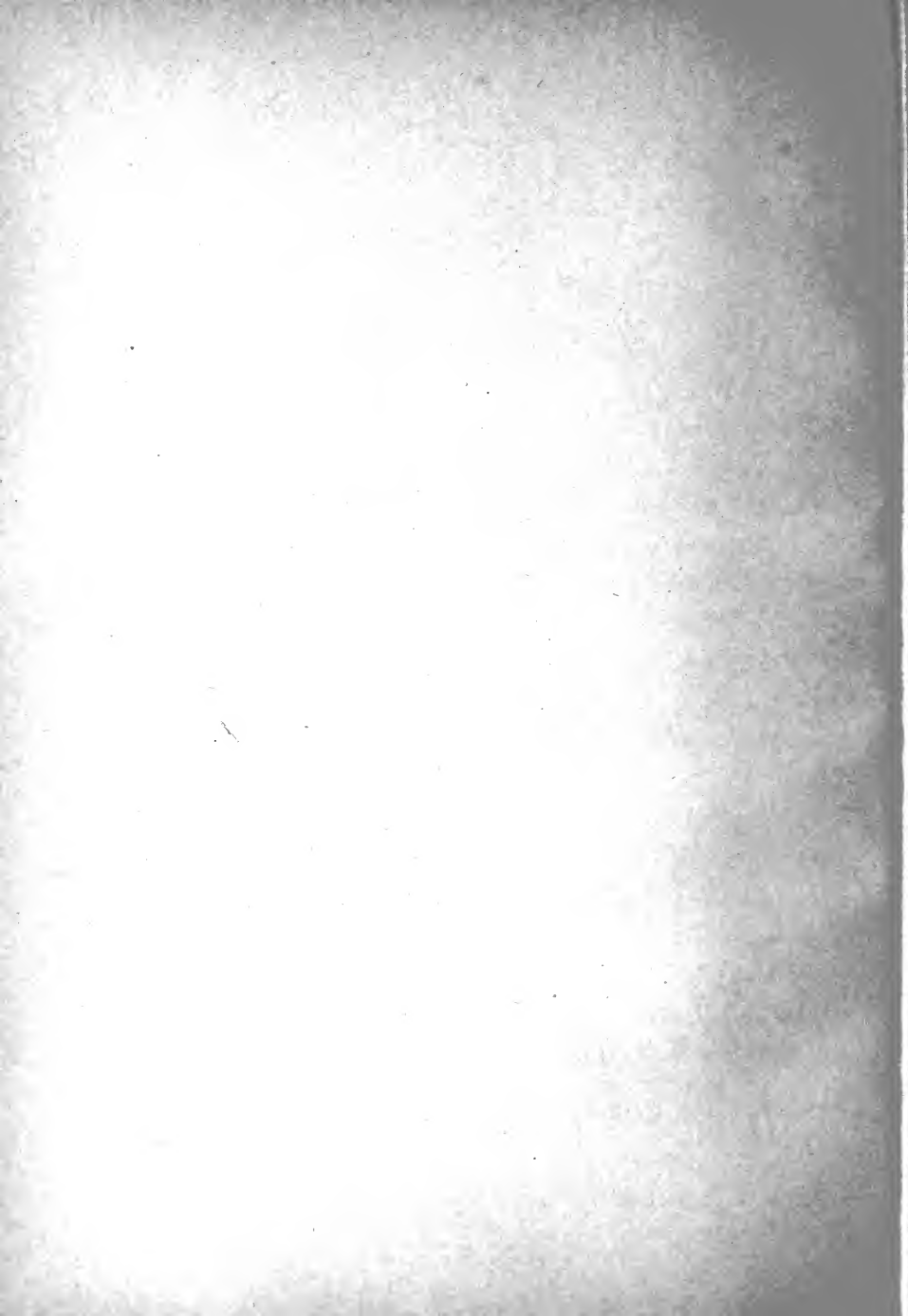
These researches have measurably established the reality of the events described by Isaiah, and the accuracy of his prophecy; and they have also furnished reasonable grounds of belief in the reality of the account of Jonah's preaching and its surprising effect, as described in the book bearing his name.*

* For the discoveries having direct relation to Jonah, see the final article, Part V., "Jonah in Nineveh."



PART II.

A STUDY OF JONAH.



A STUDY OF JONAH.*

JONAH, the son of Amittai, figures amongst the prophetic writers, but he was not one; he was only a seer, like Nathan, Elijah, Elisha, the prophet that came out of Judah, and many others. Like them his inspiration was occasional, but taught him something of the mind of God (Jonah iv. 1). His other predictions are lost for want of a chronicler; but a master-hand has recorded his great prophecy, and the strange events that preceded and followed it. This little Hebrew seer suddenly received a grand and startling commission, — to go to the banks of the Tigris, and threaten the largest, oldest, and wickedest city in the world with speedy destruction for its sins. That still, small voice, which no mortal ear had ever defied, thrilled Jonah's ear, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me."

* By the late Charles Reade, D.C.L., English novelist and moralist. The article was first published in *Good Words*, London, vol. xxix., pp. 478-483.

Here was an honor for a petty seer. His betters would have received it with pious exultation. Samuel or Nathan, Elijah, Elisha, John the Baptist, or Paul, would have risen like lions, and gone forth with strong faith and pious pride to thunder against great Nineveh. But this strange man received the order silently, and silently evaded it. He did not hang his head and object, like poor, crushed Moses, when the hot patriotism of his youth had been cooled into apathy by exile, family ties, and forty years' intercourse with Midianitish bullocks. Jonah received the divine command quietly, turned his back upon it and upon Nineveh, fled to the seaport Joppa, and sailed in a ship for distant Tarshish.

So imperfect was his inspiration at this time that he thought the hand of the God that he served could not reach him on a foreign sea.

They got into blue water; and such was his confidence, that he told the ship's company that he was flying from the tutelary God of Palestine. His hearers, no more enlightened than himself, received his communication with no misgivings.

But presently a mighty tempest from the Lord fell upon the sea, and the ship was in mortal danger. The mariners were terrified, and cried every man to his God, and not trusting too much to that, threw the cargo overboard. But there was one man who did not share their appre-

hensions. He went quietly to sleep; and neither the roaring sea, the whistling wind, nor the poor, creaking, laboring ship disturbed him. And of all the people whose lives were in such peril, who was this one calm sleeper?

It was Jonah.

But the shipmaster came to him, and shook him, and insisted on his calling on his God. But, lo! the peril increased; and from the suddenness and violence of the storm, they began to suspect the anger of the gods against some person in that doomed vessel. So they cast lots to learn who was the culprit, and the lot fell on Jonah. Then they questioned as to his country and occupation, hoping, somehow or other, to gather how he had offended Heaven.

Then Jonah, who now realized his folly and the narrow views he had taken of Him who is omnipresent and almighty, replied, "I am an Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, *who hath made the sea and the dry land.*"

Then the quaking mariners remembered he had told them he was flying from his God; and now, behold! that God, by his own confession, was not a local divinity, but the creator of sea and land.

Connecting the new revelation with the sudden tempest and their increasing peril, the men were in mortal fear,

and put a terrible question to Jonah, "What shall we do to you to save our own lives?"

Then Jonah, faulty as his character was, shone out like the sun. No shirking; no craven subterfuges. He looked them in the face and said, —

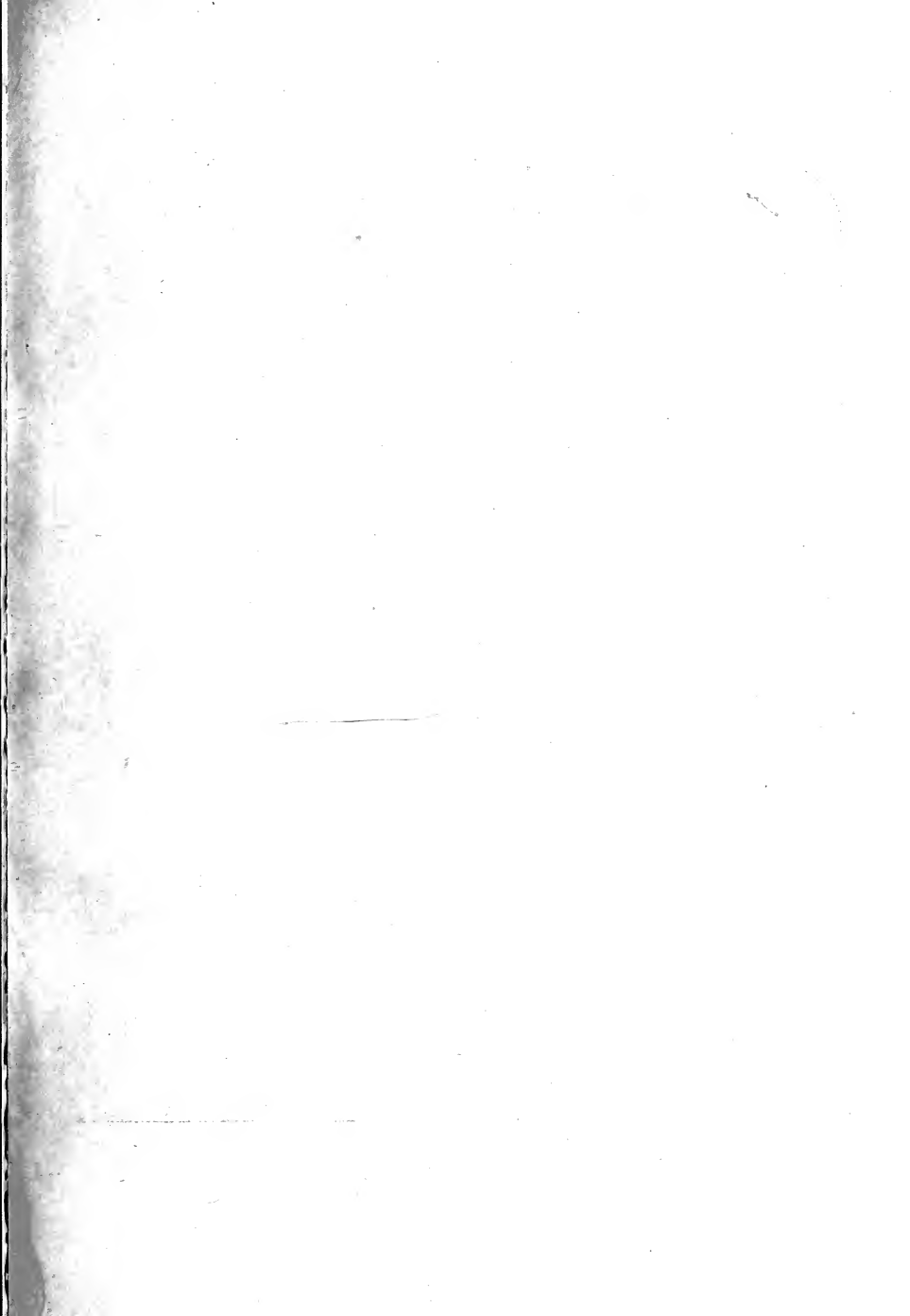
"What you must do is, lay hold on me, and cast me into the sea, so shall the sea be calm to you; for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you."

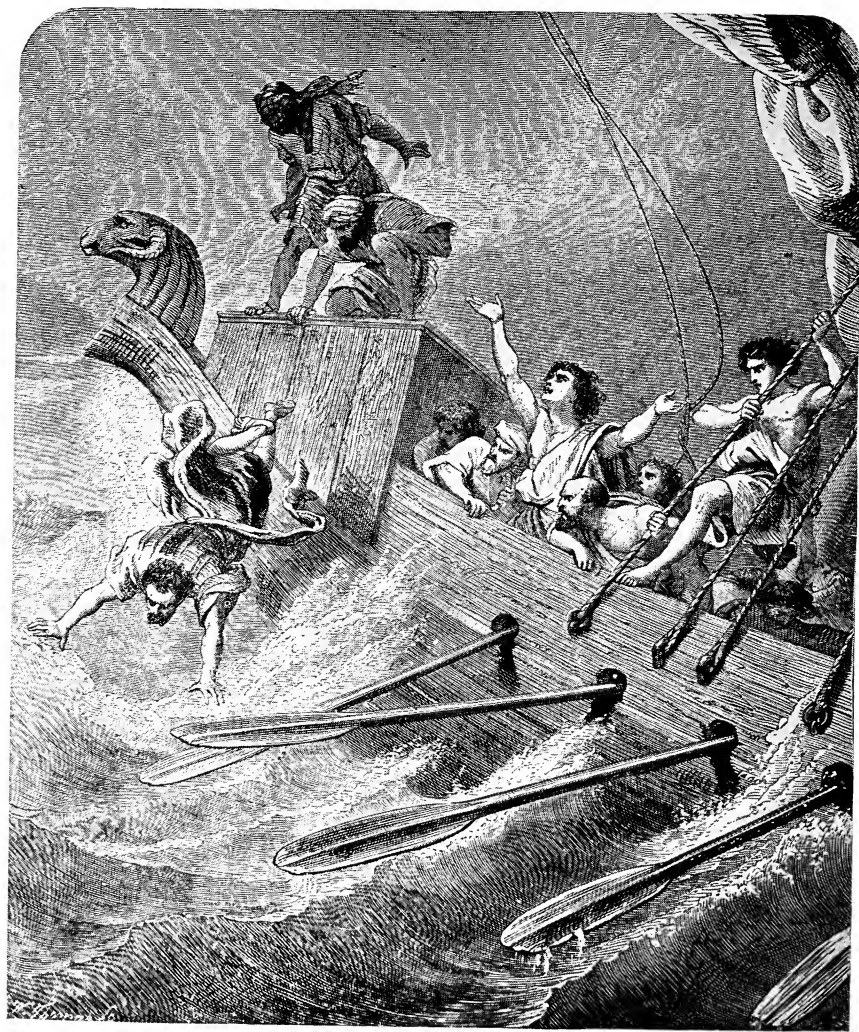
Thus did Jonah show himself a prophet and a man.

Though terror-stricken, murderous eyes glared on him, and the fearful sea yawned and raged for him, he was so true and so just that he delivered his own doom unflinchingly.

Nobility begets nobility; and the partners of his peril could not bear to sacrifice a man in whom they saw no evil, but on the contrary, justice, heroism, and self-sacrifice. The poor, honest fellows said, "Anything but that;" and chose rather to be wrecked on shore. Their ship, after all, was but a galley lightened of its cargo; so they got out their oars, and made a gallant effort to row their trireme ashore, and there leave her bones, but save their own lives and that self-sacrificing hero. This was not to be. Sixty hands laboring at those oars could not prevail against the one hand that hurled the raging sea at that laboring galley and drove her from the land.

Then these doomed men resigned themselves to the will





JONAH CAST INTO THE SEA.

of Jonah's God. They cried to him most pathetically, "We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life." And on the other hand, they begged that if Jonah was innocent his blood might not be laid on them, since they had done all they could to learn the divine will. And when they had so prayed, they took up Jonah, and cast him into the sea.

No doubt, as that pale but unflinching face went down without a cry or murmur, they looked on a while with horror and misgiving; but not for long: the sea subsided as if by magic. The waves were calmed; the wind abated; the vessel was saved. The rescued mariners worshipped the God of Jonah.

To his late companions Jonah was lost forever. But God chastises his rebellious servants, not destroys them. Some monster of the deep was sent to that ship's side, and swallowed up Jonah as he sank.

It was a terrible punishment. Think of it! For all these things are skimmed so superficially that they never really come home to the mind, least of all to the mind that is bent on preaching doctrines and not on comprehending facts. The man found himself in a place dark as pitch. . . . After the first shock of utter amazement, the sliminess, the smell, . . . must have told him where he was. Oh, then conceive his horror! So he was not to die in the sea and there an end; but to lie in the

belly of a great fish till he rotted away; or to be brought up within range of the creature's teeth, and gnawed away piecemeal, and digested in fragments.

Take my word for it, the poor wretch passed many hours of agony, expecting a slow death of torment, and would have given the world to be vomited into the raging sea and perish by drowning, — a mild and common death.

But as the hours rolled on, and death came no nearer, he began to hope a little, and to repent more and more. The man was soon crushed into that state of self-abasement and penitence out of which a forgiving God often raises his faulty servants to great honor and happiness. He prayed to God out of the fish's belly, and said, —

I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, *and* thou heardest my voice.

For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.

Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.

The waters compassed me about, *even* to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head.

I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars *was* about me for ever: yet hast

thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.

When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.

They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.

But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay *that* that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.

And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry *land*.

Who was now the happiest man in all the world? Why, — this forgiven sinner; this punished, humbled, rewarded rebel.

To him life was ten times sweeter; the sunshine, the shelly beach, the purple sea with its myriad dimples and prismatic hues, ten times more lovely than to other men.

Lazarus was happy returning from the grave to his beloved Master, and his darling sisters that wept on his neck for joy.

Happy was the widow's only son, whom the Master, mighty yet tender, delivered with his own hand from his coffin to his bereaved mother, wild with amazement and maternal love. But both these men came back from the neutral state of mere unconsciousness to daylight and the joys of life.

Not so Jonah. He had been buried alive, and came back from the sickening horror of a living tomb, from a darkness and death that he felt, to the warm, bright sunshine, the glittering sand painted with radiant shells, the purple sea smiling myriad dimples, and rainbowed with prismatic hues.

Whilst he gazed at these things with a rapture they had never before created in him, and poured out his soul in gratitude, there came to him once more the still, small voice of his Master, clear, silvery, dispassionate, and divinely beautiful.

“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.”

Jonah now obeyed with alacrity, and went to Nineveh, strong in his divine commission.

Nineveh having perished about two centuries before Herodotus visited the Tigris, we have no better authority as to its size and population than the words of the Book of Jonah. We may, however, rely on the universal tradition that it was a city of vast size and magnificence, and three days' journey in circuit by Jewish computation, or four hundred eighty Greek stadia, which two measurements agree, being sixty English miles.*

It was a brilliant and luxurious city, at the head of the world in general magnificence and in the fine arts.

* See final article, Part V., “Jonah in Nineveh.”

A rude Hebrew seer came from a country inferior in every mental quality but knowledge of God, and threatened this magnificent city with destruction in forty days, if the people did not repent of their sins, and turn to the true God.

The thing to be expected was that the townspeople would laugh at him for a day or two, and then drag him through their gutters, or whip him through the streets with his prophecy pinned to his back in cuneiform letters.

But Jonah, inspired by God, and being, so to speak, a prophet raised from the dead to do a great work, preached with supernatural power, and bowed these Assyrian hearts from the throne to the cabin. The King of Nineveh, the greatest monarch of the day, rose up from his throne at the preaching of Jonah, laid his royal robe in the dust, and sat on the ground in sackcloth and ashes, a picture of lowly penitence, and an example which all his people followed. They fasted, not by halves, but to the confines of torture. They tasted neither food nor drink, and they kept food and drink from their herds, their flocks, and their beasts of burden. They covered themselves and their cattle with sackcloth. They abstained from the sins that Jonah had denounced, and cried for mercy to the God of this Boanerges. Then God saw, pardoned, and spared.

Here was a triumph for Jonah, — alone, and with no human help, he had terrified and converted the greatest city in the world. Even egotism if humanized by benevolence could have found gratification in this. But poor Jonah was all egotism. A witty Frenchman has defined an egotist as a character who will burn down another man's house to cook himself two eggs. Jonah was quite up to the mark of this definition. He would have burned down a populous and penitent city to enjoy his one egg, — the *amour propre* of a seer.

He was sore displeased, and complained to the Lord. He even said — though I cannot say I *quite* believe him — that this was the only reason why he had fled to Tarshish.* He knew his prophecy would prove an empty menace; for said he, "I know that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. *I wish I was dead.*"

Now, if any of us had been allowed to speak for God, we should have come down on this egotist like a sledgehammer.

What! do you cast in God's teeth that quality by which you alone have yourself escaped destruction? Return, then, to the belly of that shark, and there, in the

* Since it is apparent that Jonah was a person of some wealth, we may suppose that in going to Tarshish he had also a commercial project in mind.

darkness of your eyes, let light visit your soul blinded by egotism.

Come, now, shall penitent Jonah and penitent Nineveh be destroyed for their repented sins, or shall both be saved, and God be consistent, though man, Jonah included, is not?

But God never talks like that. He is better than man at man's best. Man forgives, but remembers, and sometimes even alludes. God, when he forgives, obliterates. It is so throughout the sacred books; and although neither the Hebrew writers nor any other writers can comprehend or describe the infinite God, yet they all reveal this fragment of his infinite nature with a consistency that bears the stamp of truth, and excludes the idea of invention.

When Jonah stood by the seaside, saved from death, God did not say to him, "See what comes of resisting my will!" He obliterated what he had forgiven, and merely repeated his command about Nineveh without an unkind word. And now that this wayward servant reproached him with his weakness in forgiving penitent Chaldeans, he only said to him, with more than maternal sweetness, "Dost thou well to be angry?" This did not melt the angry Jonah. He turned his back on the city, which he hated for not fulfilling his prediction punctually. He went out into the fields, and sat down

to see whether God would really be so cruel as to mortify Jonah, and save six hundred thousand people, not one of whom was Jonah.

God pitied his servant exposed to the midday heat, and prepared a gourd to comfort his aching head, and afterward instruct his heart.

Then Jonah enjoyed great happiness. All the day he looked upon a wonder of nature. A lovely gourd came up from the ground, growing slowly but perceptibly, and reared and expanded its huge, succulent leaves, till they formed a thick canopy over the head of the favored prophet.

Then Jonah rejoiced in the impenetrable shade of this lovely plant, and began to be half-reconciled to the prolonged existence of Nineveh.

Then the gourd entered on its second office. The Almighty had planted a worm in the gourd, and the worm was enabled to destroy it as rapidly as it had grown.

Then did the sun and the hot wind beat on Jonah's head; and he cried once more, as our foolish women do when things go wrong, —

“I wish I was dead.”

Then God said to Jonah tenderly, “Doest thou well to be angry?”

Ungracious Jonah replied roughly, “I do well to be angry, even unto death.”

Then came the still, small voice, sweet yet clear, gentle yet mighty and penetrating, which no patriarch but Jonah ever resisted so long; and even he must yield to it at last.

“Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night. And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left; and also much cattle?”

Now, if the reader of Jonah is curious to know whether he left Nineveh as great an egotist as he entered it, I can only give him one man's opinion, but it is not a hasty one. In the first place, the Omniscient is not to be defeated; why should Jonah's egotism resist him to the end, any more than Jonah's flight baffled him? . . .

Prima facie, the Almighty must conquer the heart of Jonah, since he knows the way to every heart.

Starting from this safe position, I ask myself why so faulty a man as Jonah was so honored? Clearly it was not because of his rebellious spirit, nor his egotism, but in spite of them.

Probably he was a man of pure life and morals; certainly he was the soul of truth. Why should not the God of truth select as a vehicle of prophecy the brave, truthful man, who, facing desperate men with the sea

raging on him at his back, could say, "The truth is, you must take me up, and fling me into the sea; for with my just execution the storm will abate."

Jonah did not write the book, but he must have communicated the facts and the main particulars of the dialogue.

Now, no *unconverted* egotist tells a tale so fairly throughout, and the concluding dialogue so thoroughly against himself, as it is done in this book. You read this dialogue between God and a man, and the writer is a man. A man yourself, you are shocked at the man, and you bless God.

Moreover, he has given God the last word and the best. Now, no *unconverted* egotist ever did that, nor ever will. The *unconverted* egotist is to be found in a thousand autobiographies. Catch him giving an opponent the last word, or the best.

I have little doubt, therefore, that Jonah went home a converted egotist, and that when he came to think quietly over it all, he yielded to divine instruction, and that his character kept improving to the last day of his life.

Of course I reject the conventional theory that Jonah, being a prophet, had no personal weakness under his skin, and wished penitent Nineveh to be destroyed only because he feared for his own nation if it was left standing. If he foresaw the Captivity at all, he must have known that the danger was to be from Babylon, after Nineveh had been centuries extinct.

Long after Jonah, Nahum threatened Nineveh, but did not fear it.

Those skimmers forget that if Jonah was faultless, God must have been imperfect, since God and he were in direct opposition; and that not once, but twice. The Book of Jonah is generally underrated. One reason is, it is judged by commentators who have never tried to tell an immortal story; so they underrate a man immeasurably their superior, since the able narrator is above the able commentator, and high as heaven above the conventional commentator, who is mad after types, and who follows his predecessors, who follow theirs, "*ut anser trahit anserem.*"

The truth is, that "Jonah" is the most beautiful story ever written in so small a compass.

Now, in writing it is condensation that declares the master; verbosity and garrulity have their day, but only hot-pressed narrative lives forever. The Book of Jonah is in forty-eight verses, or one thousand three hundred and twenty-eight English words.

Now, take one thousand three hundred and twenty-eight words in our current narratives, how far do they carry you? Why, ten to one you get to nothing at all but chatter, chatter, chatter. Even in those close models, "Robinson Crusoe," "The Vicar of Wakefield," "Candide," "Rasselas," one thousand three hundred and twenty-eight words do not carry the reader far; yet in the one thou-

sand three hundred and twenty-eight words of Jonah you have a wealth of incident, and all the dialogue needed to carry on the grand and varied action. You have also character, not stationary, but growing, just as Jonah grew, and a plot that would bear volumes, yet worked out without haste or crudity in one thousand three hundred and twenty-eight words.

Then, there is another thing. Only the great artists of the pen hit upon the perfect proportions of dialogue and narrative. With nineteen story-tellers out of twenty, there is a weary excess of dialogue. Nor are all the sacred narratives so nicely proportioned as Jonah. In Job the narrative is so short as to be crude and uninteresting compared with the events handled; and the dialogue is excessive, and in some places false, since similar sentiments and even similar words are given to different speakers. In the Apocrypha, Judith and Tobit are literally massacred by verbosity and bungling; not so, however, in Susanna and the Elders — that is a masterpiece as far as it goes.

To my mind, speaking merely as an artist, the Acts of the Apostles eclipses all human narratives.

“Stellas exortus uti Ætherius sol;”

and in the Old Testament, Genesis, Samuel, Jonah, and Ruth stand pre-eminent, and Jonah above sweet Ruth by the greater weight of the facts, and the introduction of

the Deity. And oh, the blindness of conventional critics, groping Hebrew records, not for pearls of fact, but pebbles of dogma! They have failed to observe that the God of Jonah is the God of the New Testament. Yet it is so; and this great book connects the two Bibles, instead of contrasting them and sore perplexing every honest mind with a changeable Deity.

No doubt the God of the New Testament can be found, or heavenly glimpses of him, in the Hebrew prophets. But how about the historians? The truculent writers of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel have surely now and then colored the unchangeable God from their own minds and their own state of civilization.

The Book of Jonah is not a book of prophecy, but just as much a history as Samuel; yet in the history of Jonah, written long before Isaiah, God is the God of the New Testament, — the God we all hope to find in this world and the next.

Were there no other reason, every Christian may well cling to the Book of Jonah. As to the leading miracle, which staggers some people who receive other miracles, these men are surely inconsistent. There can be no scale of the miraculous. To infinite power it is no easier to pick up a pin than to stop all the planets in their courses for a time and then send them on again.

Say there never was a miracle and never will be, and

I differ, but cannot confute you. Deny the creation and the possibility of a re-creation or resurrection; call David a fool for saying, "It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves," and . . . a wise man for suggesting that, on the contrary, molecules created themselves without a miracle, and we made ourselves out of molecules without a miracle—and although your theory contradicts experience as much, and staggers credulity more, than any miracle that has ever been ascribed by Christians or Jews to infinite power, I admit it is consistent, though droll.

But once grant the creation of a hundred thousand suns and a million planets, though we never in our short span saw one created; grant the creation of men, lions, fleas, and sea-anemones, though all such creations are contrary to our experience; and it is a little too childish to draw back and say that our Creator and re-Creator is only the Lord of flesh, and that fish are beyond his control.

Clearly, the infinite power can create a new fish in Jewish waters, or despatch an old fish . . . from the Pacific to the shores of Palestine.

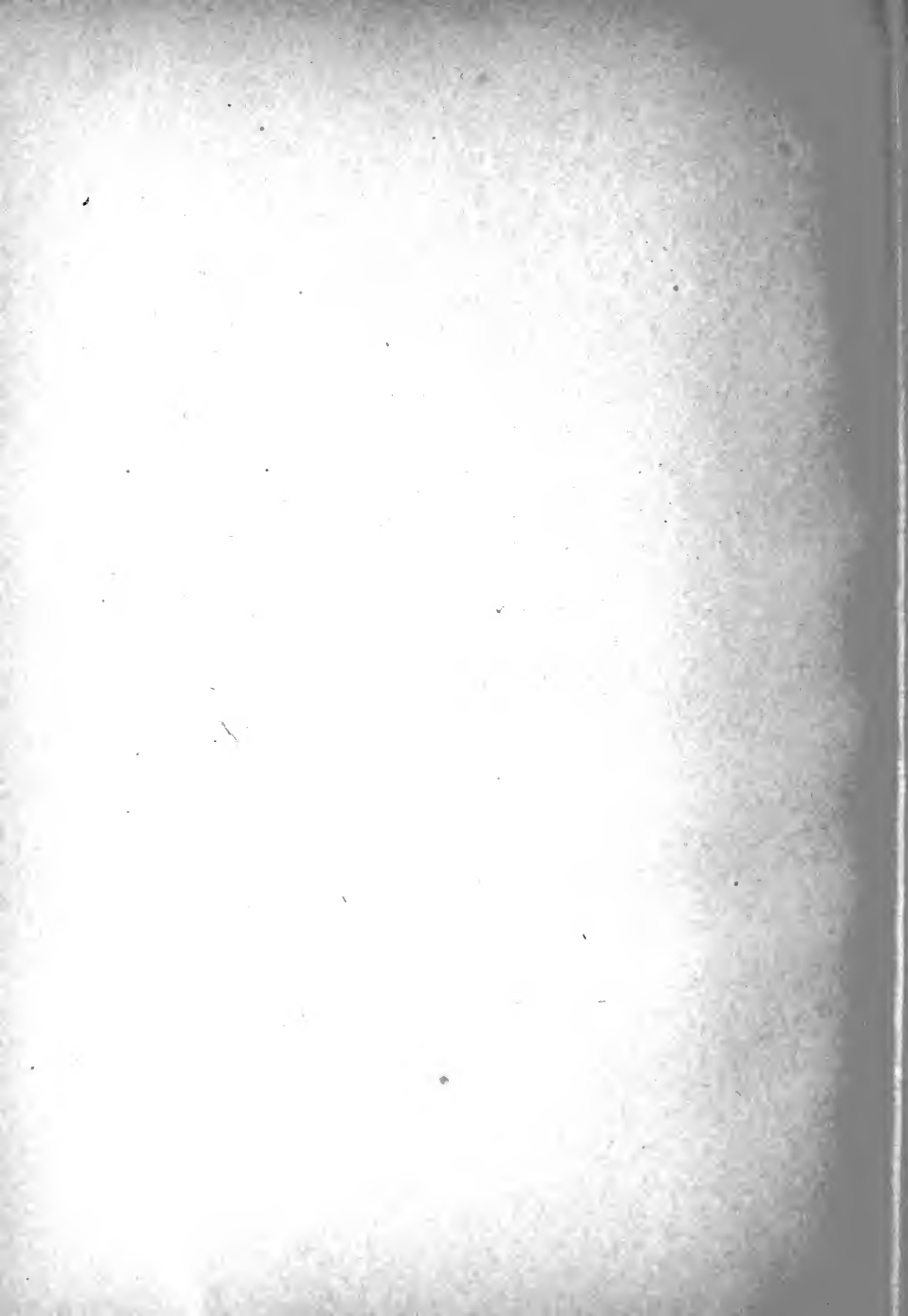
Now, to go from power to wisdom, is this miracle a childish one? Does it smack of human invention?

What were the objects to be gained by it? A rebellious servant was to be crushed into submission, yet not destroyed. He was to feel the brief agony of death by

drowning, then to be laid in a horrible dark prison till he repented, then to be restored to the world in a fit state of mind and body to take a long journey, and threaten the greatest city in the world.

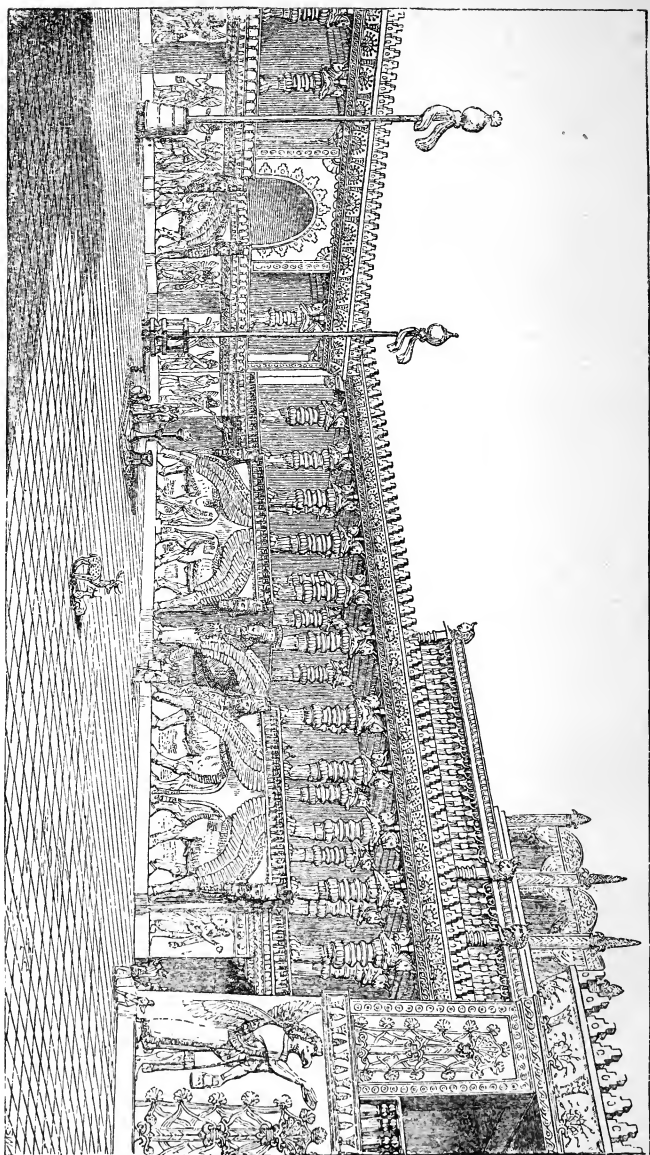
Tackle all those difficulties, effect all these just and wise objects, invent your own miracle, and perhaps, when you compare it with Jonah's, you will think very highly of the latter, and not so highly of the noble army of skimmers, who have discredited and sneered at a record they have never tried hard to comprehend.

"Facile judicat qui pauca considerat."



PART III.

THE BOOK OF JONAH.



ANGLE OF PALACE COURT, KHORSABAD. 1

THE BOOK OF JONAH.

CHAPTER I.

1 Jonah, sent to Nineveh, fleeth to Tarshish. 4 He is bewrayed by a tempest, 11 thrown into the sea, 17 and swallowed by a fish.

Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,

2 Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.*

3 But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.†

4 ¶ But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.

5 Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that *were* in the ship into the sea, to lighten *it* of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep.

* See Note 2 at close of this article.

† See Note 3.

6 So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.

7 And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil *is* upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.

8 Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil *is* upon us; What *is* thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what *is* thy country? and of what people *art* thou?

9 And he said unto them, I *am* a Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry *land*.

10 Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

11 ¶ Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous.

12 And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest *is* upon you.

13 Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring *it* to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them.

14 Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee.

15 So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea : and the sea ceased from her raging.

16 Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows.

17 ¶ Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

CHAPTER 2.

1 The prayer of Jonah. 10 He is delivered from the fish.

Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly,

2 And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me ; out of the belly of hell cried I, *and* thou heardest my voice.

3 For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas ; and the floods compassed me about : all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.

4 Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight ; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.

5 The waters compassed me about, *even* to the soul : the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head.

6 I went down to the bottoms of the mountains ; the earth with her bars *was* about me for ever : yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.

7 When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD : and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.†

8 They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.

9 But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay *that* that I have vowed. Salvation *is* of the LORD.

10 ¶ And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry *land*.

CHAPTER 3.

*1 Jonah, sent again, preacheth to the Ninevites. 5 Upon their repentance,
10 God repenteth.*

AND the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying,

2 Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.

3 So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey.

4 And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

5 ¶ So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.*

6 For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered *him* with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

7 And he caused *it* to be proclaimed and published

* See Note 4.

through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing : let them not feed, nor drink water :

8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God : yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that *is* in their hands.

9 Who can tell *if* God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not ?

10 ¶ And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way ; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them ; and he did *it* not.

CHAPTER 4.

1 Jonah, repining at God's mercy, 4 is reproved by the type of a gourd.

BUT it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.

2 And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, *was* not this my saying, when I was yet in my country ? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish : for I knew that thou *art* a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.

3 Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, my life from me ; for *it is* better for me to die than to live.

4 ¶ Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry ?

5 So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city.

6 And the LORD God prepared a gourd, and made *it* to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceedingly glad of the gourd.*

7 But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered.

8 And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, *It is better for me to die than to live.*

9 And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, *even* unto death.

10 Then said the LORD, thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night:

11 And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and *also* much cattle? †

[NOTE 1.]

NOTE TO FRONTISPIECE OF THE BOOK OF JONAH. — The mound of Khorsabad is situated about fourteen miles north-east of Mosul, on the left bank of the little river Khauser, which empties into the Tigris nearly opposite Mosul, dividing the walled portion of the city

* See Note 5.

† See Note 6.

of Nineveh into two nearly equal parts. The city was built by Sargon. It affords the best opportunity for the study of the architectural genius of Assyria. The city was laid out on a square, and had walls forty-six feet thick, and over a mile in length each way. The angles faced the four cardinal points. The outer wall was flanked by eight tall towers, and was erected on a mound of rubble.

[NOTE 2.]

The date of Jonah's prophecy, according to late authority, was about B.C. 825.

[NOTE 3.]

If Jonah were at his home at Gath-hepher (two miles from Sepharialah, or Diocæsarea, on the way to Tiberias from the port of Cæsarea), he may have found no vessel at this nearer port, or, at least, none that would bear him whither he wished to go, and therefore continued on to the next important port. Being a prophet, he may have been at the school of prophets at Hebron when the word of the Lord came to him; and here Joppa was near at hand.

"Tarshish, according to Herman Von de Hart (a somewhat fanciful commentator), represents the kingdom of Lydia; the ship, the Jewish republic, whose captain was the high-priest; while the casting of Jonah into the sea symbolized the temporary captivity of Manasseh in Babylon." — McCLINTOCK and STRONG.

That there was anciently a considerable port bearing the name Tarshish there is no doubt, any more than there is now any doubt that there was a real city called Nineveh — which was long denied, until the explorations and excavations established the fact. The port has been held by some to have been at or near Carthage, while others have placed it at the north of the Ægean Sea or on the Adriatic; but the latest conclusion of the students of ancient geography is that it was a port on the south-west coast of Spain, west of the Strait of Gibraltar — literally at the "end of the earth," as known in Jonah's time.

[NOTE 4.]

The Scripture does not say that Jonah spoke to the people of Nineveh in the name of Jehovah; neither is there any indication that he attempted to convert them to Judaism. The wickedness against which the word of the Lord was directed was not such in the Jewish code alone, but of a kind condemned even by Assyrian standards. The people of Nineveh may not have known that Jonah was sent to them by Jehovah, the God of Israel; but for some reason they received him as one having divine authority. — See Part V., “Jonah in Nineveh.”

[NOTE 5.]

“The ‘gourd’ is supposed by some to have been the castor-oil plant, now commonly known in Syria and the Mediterranean countries by the name *Palina Christi*. The original word, KIKAION, is the same as the Egyptian KIKI and Talmudic KIK, only with the Hebrew termination added. The plant is biennial, and usually grows to the height of from eight to ten feet. Its leaves resemble those of the Oriental plane-tree, but are larger, smoother, and of a deeper hue; they are broad, palmate, and serrated, and are divided into six or seven lobes. Henderson says that “only one leaf grows upon a branch; but being large, sometimes measuring more than a foot, and spreading out in the shape of an open hand with the fingers extended, their collective shade affords an excellent shelter from the heat of the sun. It is of exceeding quick growth, and has been known in America to reach the height of thirteen feet in less than three months. When injured, it wilts and decays with great rapidity.

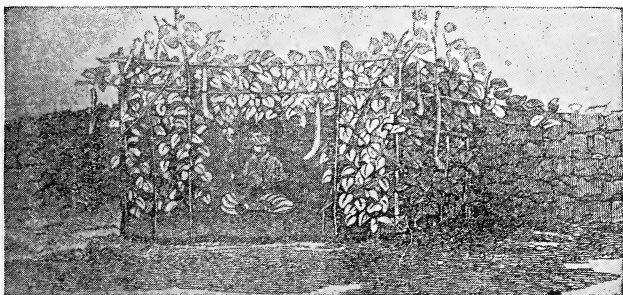
“Other commentators are satisfied that the true *gourd* is really the plant meant; and they attribute the above opinion to the accidental similarity of the words in the modern Semitic dialects. They affirm that creepers of the gourd family, such as the climbing vine of rapid growth, are commonly planted around arbors in th

East, over which they form an agreeable shade." — *Cassell's Illustrated Family Bible*.

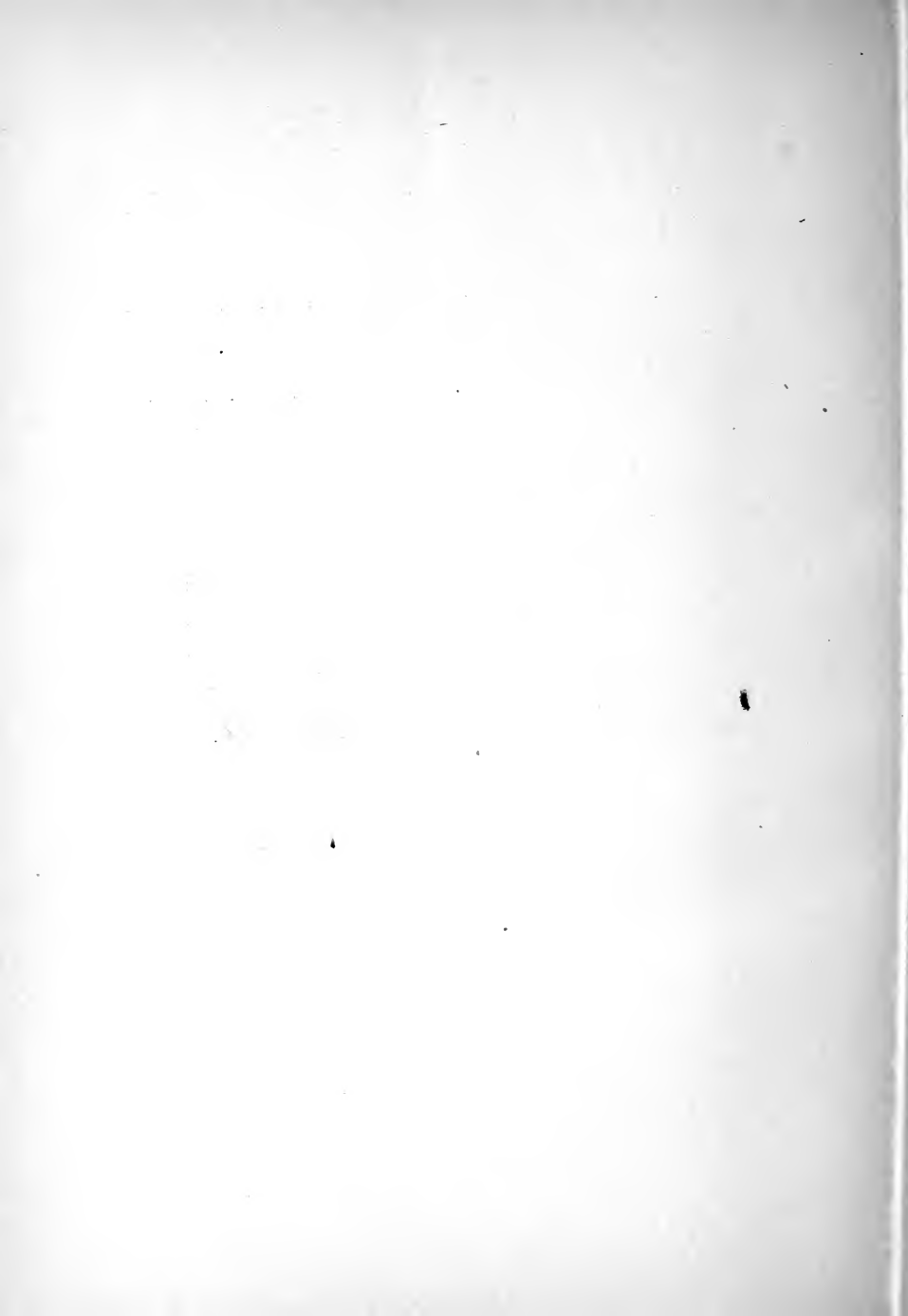
[NOTE 6.]

The apocryphal book Tobit, and the "Antiquities," etc., of Josephus, refer to Jonah as historic. See Tobit xiv. 4-8; Josephus, Ant. x. 10+; also, 2 Esdras i. last ¶.

References by our Lord to Jonah: Matt. xii. 38-41; xvi. 4; Luke xi. 29-32.

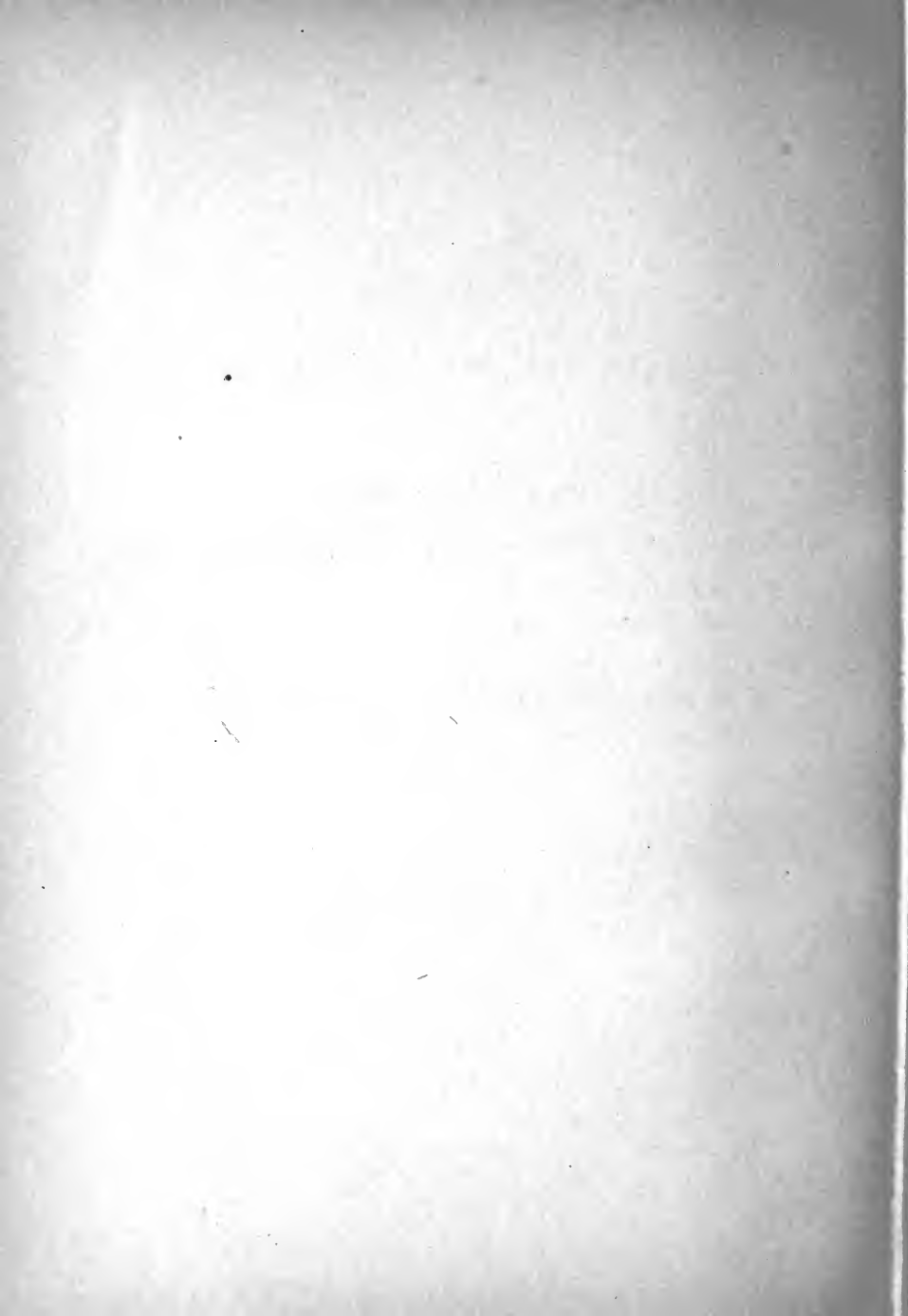


JONAH SITTING IN HIS BOOTH.



PART IV.

JONAH AND THE SEA-MONSTER.



JONAH AND THE SEA-MONSTER.

A NATURAL VIEW.*

THE well-known tendency of the Orientals to express themselves in allegory has led many readers of the Book of Jonah in the Old Testament Scriptures to regard the story as a fine example of this class of writing.

When it was not known that an actual great city of Nineveh ever existed, it was not unreasonable to suppose that this book merely represented powers and tendencies of the human soul; while those who did not think it possible that a man could be swallowed by any creature, and then, by regurgitation, opportunely arrive, not greatly harmed, on firm ground, might without irreverence regard the account of Jonah's mishap as a literary figure setting forth the common experience of some human faculty's failing to perform its office and becoming perverted; or of a spiritual man, who, diso-

* By George J. Varney, author of "The Story of Patriots' Day," "A Brief History of Maine," etc.

beying the divine command, almost certainly becomes overwhelmed in a flood of worldly matters, and finally is swallowed up in grossness, losing entirely, or temporarily, his spiritual life.*

Undoubtedly the story of Jonah does serve usefully in all these respects, and might in many more. Swedenborg, the high-priest of -symbolism, or correspondence, treats it as a genuine record of real natural experiences; but he says also that it is full of correspondences.† It may therefore be regarded as a very instructive portion of the sacred Scriptures; and it is certain to be less lightly treated in the future than it has been for a long time past.§ In its literary quality the Book of Jonah is not surpassed by any in the volume of which it forms a part.

The story of the gourd may or may not be a fable or parable. It differs from common experience of the kind only in a shortening of the action, — which is apparent only, arising from the compression of the narrative.

There are passages in the histories of nations and of eminent personages, especially those which are subjects of the sacred record, that furnish important instruction relating to the conduct of the spiritual as well as the nat-

* See Note 1 at close of this article.

† See Note 2.

‡ See Note 3.

ural life. There is a parallelism discoverable between the spiritual and the natural worlds, as might be expected from their having the same Creator; and the sacred record appears to have been made largely for our instruction through the correspondence of those two worlds or states of being.

To persons who have an acquaintance with the results of modern research in those old Oriental countries to the degree common in our Sunday-schools, there is nothing in the Book of Jonah which appears either unnatural or impossible except the passage of the prophet into the stomach of a sea-monster, and his ejection from the same unharmed. Consequently in this article we need concern ourselves with nothing else.

Does it appear unreasonable that a "whale" (or, literally translated, sea-monster) should be in such position as to take the "man-overboard," while yet alive, into its capacious maw? On the contrary, old whalers (supposing the creature to have been a whale) will all tell you that this animal is apt to mistake the commotion of the water in the wake of a vessel for the disturbance caused by schools of small fish, which form more or less of its food, inducing the hungry monster to make a charge with open mouth along its line.

The habit of the pilot-fish and of sharks in following vessels is well known. Whales also sometimes show sim-

ilar action. The following citation from the journal of a voyage in the Pacific Ocean in 1850 is to the point.*

"*November 13, . . .* A week ago to-day we passed several [sulphur-bottom whales], and during the afternoon it was discovered that one of them continued to follow us, and was becoming more familiar, keeping under the ship, and only coming out to breathe. His length is about eighty feet; his tail measures about twelve feet across; and in the calm, as we look down into the transparent water, we see him in all his huge proportions.

"*November 29th.* The bark Kirkwood hove in sight, and bore down to speak us. When off a mile or two to leeward, our whale left us, and went to her, but returned soon after.

"He showed great restlessness last night; and to-day, when we stood off to the outward tack, he kept close below us, and rose just under our quarter, and most commonly to windward, to blow. But whenever we stood toward the land he invariably hung back and showed discontent. This afternoon he left us. It is now twenty-four days since he attached himself to us, and during that time he has followed us as faithfully as a dog an emigrant's wagon. At first we abused him in every way our ingenuity could devise, to drive him off, lest he might do us some mischief; but save some scratches he received from our ship's coppering . . . no damage was received by either of us by his close companionship."

Without question, in this instance, as in many others known, a huge sea-monster was in position to swallow a man, had one fallen overboard. Neither can there be

* This is the record of an estimable physician of San Francisco, Dr. J. D. B. Stillman; approved and published by Charles M. Scammon, Captain U. S. Revenue Marine, San Francisco, author of a monograph on marine mammals.

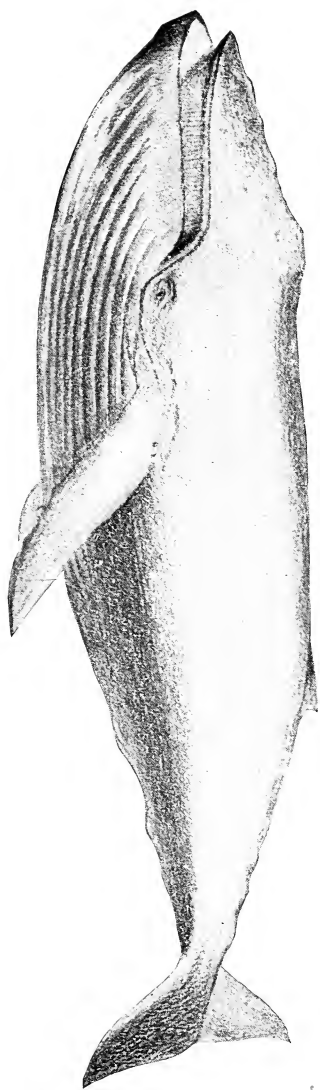
any doubt that in case of the man-eating shark, and of some whales, in such vicinity, the man would have been swallowed. By any of these sharks now known to exist he would escape mangling only by the strength of his garments; but would such have been the case with a man swallowed by a whale? Light is thrown on both these points (i.e., the disposition of a whale to pick up a man when opportunity offers, and the degree of mangling the victim would undergo) by an incident in the voyage of the bark *Guy C. Goss* of New Bedford, from Yokohama, Japan, to Tacoma, Wash., in July, 1891. During a terrific gale, one of the sailors, a Japanese, while on the topmast reefing a sail, lost his hold, and was thrown into the raging waves. The life-boat was put out, but the unfortunate man could not be found. They had turned back to the vessel, when a whale came up near by, and he was soon perceived to be writhing as if in distress. Suddenly the missing Jap was violently ejected from the whale's mouth, falling naturally upon the deck,—“saved by a miracle” was the language of the report.* He was carefully nursed, and was finally brought back to consciousness and health, though he had been severely jammed between the whale's jaws. He was dressed in an oilcloth suit, which had been recently

* *New Bedford Mercury*, July 29, 1891. This is the trusted journal of the chief whaling-port in America.

smeared with kerosene, and this probably rendered him an unpalatable morsel.

The sulphur-bottom, the hump-back (which are of the whalebone species), the sperm (toothed), and all others of the huge gill-less amphibians (breathing through a nostril at the top of the head) which frequent the waters of the temperate and torrid zones, are now sometimes found in the Mediterranean Sea, and were still more bold and frequent there in that early period before man had dared to attack any except a small one, and this under exceptionally favorable conditions. Undoubtedly any of these would take into its enormous mouth anything of fish or flesh which it encountered floating in a ship's wake. Would one swallow a man without mangling him? As all of the whales mentioned, except the sperm, are without teeth, and swallow other objects without mangling, the body of a man would similarly escape if he were swallowed. The reason why more of such incidents are not known to whalers probably is that whales, like other animals, do not eat while they are fighting for life.

It has been asserted of the bowhead, and less positively of the "right" whale, that these have too small a gullet to admit the passing of a man's body. The first of these is not found outside of the Arctic Ocean, and the other is rarely seen far southward of the Arctic Circle; so that were their gullets as contracted as disputatious persons



THE HUMBACK WHALE.



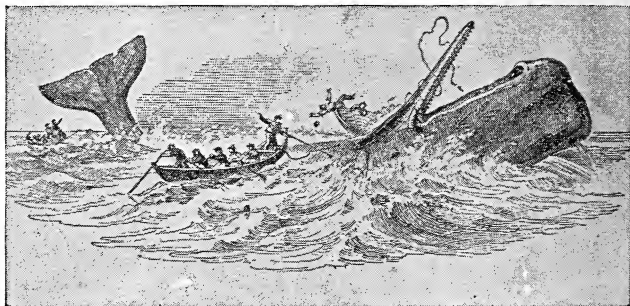
assert, it would not affect conditions in the Mediterranean Sea. Yet let us inquire if the statement be true of any mature whale.

The baleen whales (those which have the screen of whalebone in their mouths), when feeding, rush forward with jaws dispread into the schools or swarms of the small creatures which form their food. The fibrous slabs of whalebone, through which the water escapes, stop the multitude of small creatures, which are thus retained in the huge spoonlike or ladlelike cavity of the lower jaw. Of course, during this operation, the gullet must be entirely closed, else the creature's stomach would be filled with salt water; but when this has been driven out of the mouth by the lifting of the tongue, and the jaws are shut closely, the gullet opens for swallowing the great mass of collected fishes. Now, how widely must the gullet open, how large must the aperture be, for the passage of the largest object which happened to be gathered up in the scoop?

Large quantities of codfish are sometimes found in the stomach of the humpback whale (scarcely more than half the size to which the "right" whale and the bow-head attain), and some in those of other whales. Among these are fish almost as large, and which would be as difficult to swallow, as a man; neither does the whale swallow his prey one by one. Indeed, creatures meas-

uring from fifteen to forty feet in circumference at the angle of the jaws do not lack throat space. No one ever heard of a whale that choked.

The prey of the sperm whale is generally of large size, and of course liable to lacerations from the full-toothed lower jaw; yet objects of comparatively small size, or those which make no violent struggles, may



A SPERM WHALE FIGHTING HIS CAPTORS.

escape. No evidence is reported that the contents of the sperm whale's stomach have been subjected to crushing. The long, conical, ivory teeth, slightly curved inward and backward, are adapted only for seizing, holding, and dividing bodies of large size; and there are no teeth at all suitable for grinding, those of the upper jaw being rudimentary only. The principal food of this whale is "squid," a term applied by sailors to all kinds

of cuttlefish,—the calamary, octopus, and others,—many of them of great size, but of soft flesh, and without bony skeleton. Dolphins also, horse-mackerel, and even sharks are found in the vast stomach of the sperm whale.

Mr. Joseph Swain, an old Nantucket whaleman of excellent reputation, has many times related the capture of a sperm whale, which in its death-struggle vomited up a piece of shark several feet long—a victim which could only have been overcome by considerable use of the jaws.

This throwing up the contents of the stomach when in distress is a common and well-known action of the whale. “The sperm-whale,” says Starbuck,* “in the agony of his ‘flurry,’ often throws up immense pieces of undigested food,—pieces half as large as a whale-boat being frequently seen; and these seem to be mere fragments of the immense marine monster to which they formerly belonged.”

If the statement of a scientist rather than that of sailors is preferred, we have that, also, in a recent publication by M. Joubin, a Frenchman, and a member of the Academy of Sciences, who describes an occurrence which had numerous witnesses during the scientific cruise of the Princess Alice in 1895. Near the Azores, a

* “History of American Whale Fishery,” p. 166.

sperm whale, forty-four feet in length, was caught. Just before the great cetacean drew his last breath, he cast up several large cephalopods in excellent condition, which was accepted by the scientists as irrefragible evidence that heavier and softer animals than man may be swallowed and yet preserved alive. This incident furnishes another illustration of life in queer and "impossible" conditions.

Blumenbach, an early German zoölogist, in his "Manual of Natural History," says that a horse has been found whole in the stomach of a sea-dog. Lacépède, in his "*Histoire des Poissons*," says that sea-dogs "have a lower jaw of nearly six feet in its semicircular extent," which "enables us to understand how they can swallow animals as large as or larger than ourselves." This creature is now known as the white shark (*carcharias*), which still abounds in Mediterranean waters. Instances are said to have been known of their attaining a length of thirty feet, and a weight of nearly ten thousand pounds.

Bishop Pusey, in his "Introduction to the Book of Jonah,"* and Professor C. E. Stowe, D.D.,† cite from Müller‡ the following passage: "In 1758, in stormy weather, a sailor fell overboard from a frigate in the Mediterranean.

* "The Minor Prophets," Part III., p. 347.

† *Bibliotheca Sacra*, X., 739-764.

‡ "The System of Nature of Linneus," p. 750.

A shark was close by, which, as he was swimming and crying for help, took him in his wide throat, so that he forthwith disappeared. Other sailors had leaped into the sloop [a special boat] to help their comrade while he was yet swimming. The captain had a gun, which stood on the deck, discharged at the fish, which struck it so that it cast out the sailor which it had in its throat, who was taken up alive and little injured, by the sloop which had come up to him. The fish was harpooned, taken upon the frigate, and dried. The captain made a present of it to the sailor who by God's providence had been so wonderfully preserved. The sailor went around Europe exhibiting it. He came to Franconia; and it was publicly exhibited here in Erlangen, as also at Nurnberg and other places [in Germany]. The dried fish was demeated. It was twenty feet long, and, with expanded fins, nine feet wide, and weighed three thousand nine hundred and twenty-four pounds."

A writer of the sixteenth century * on the fish of Marseilles says, "They of Nice attested to me that they had taken a fish of this sort [the white shark, *carcharias*] approaching four thousand pounds weight, in whose body they had found a man whole. Those of Marseilles told something similar, — that they had once taken a lamia (so

* Gyll de Gall. et Sat. nom. pisc. Massil. c. 99, A.D. 1535.

they still popularly call the *carcharias*), and found in it a man in a coat of mail."

Such an incident is related to have occurred in A.D. 1802, on the authority of a Captain Brown, who found the body of a woman entire, with the exception of the head, within the stomach of a shark killed by him off Surinam (Dutch Guiana).*

M. Brünniche says † that during his residence at Marseilles, a white shark was taken near that city, fifteen feet long; and that two years before, two, much larger, had been taken, in one of which had been found two tunnies, and a man quite dressed. The fish were injured, the man not at all.

Pliny the younger, in the first century (50 A.D.), mentions that the skeleton of a sea-monster forty feet in length, whose ribs were higher than those of an Indian elephant, "was brought from Joppa, a city of Judea, and exhibited in Rome by M. Scaurus.‡ This, indeed, may have belonged to the very sea-rover which entertained Jonah.

That sea-monsters were well known and feared a long period before the Christian era is evidenced by passages in the Psalms and in the Book of Job. "Am I a sea or a whale, that thou settest a watch over me?" (Job vii. 12).

* Buffon, ed. Sonnini, Poissons, III., p. 334, ed. of 1803.

† Pisc. Mass., p. 6.

‡ Pliny, Hist. Nat., I., ix., chap. iv.

That either the sperm whale or the sea-dog was a familiar creature to the dwellers on Syrian seacoasts is shown by the description of leviathan, as "his teeth are terrible round about." "He maketh the deep to boil like a pot" (Job xli.).

A more plausible argument against the truth of the story is that, even if Jonah had been swallowed unhurt, he could not have lived an hour in the creature's stomach because of noxious gases; whereas he is represented as having lived and retained the use of his mental faculties for three days * in that situation.

We know, at least, that the human stomach has furnished a home wherein frogs, newts, and salamanders have thriven for months, and then been thrown up alive. Why may not a man have retained his vitality for three days in the stomach of a whale, the proportion between the contained and the container in both instances being the same? Why may there not have been conditions from which a sufficient quantity of air might be present in a whale's stomach to sustain animal life? The frogs and salamanders are, like man, under the necessity of coming above water for breath, and so is the whale; and, as its mouth is often open when at the surface, the passage of air to the stomach seems unavoidable. That this is possible, despite the denials of agnostics, is shown by a recent

* See Note 4.

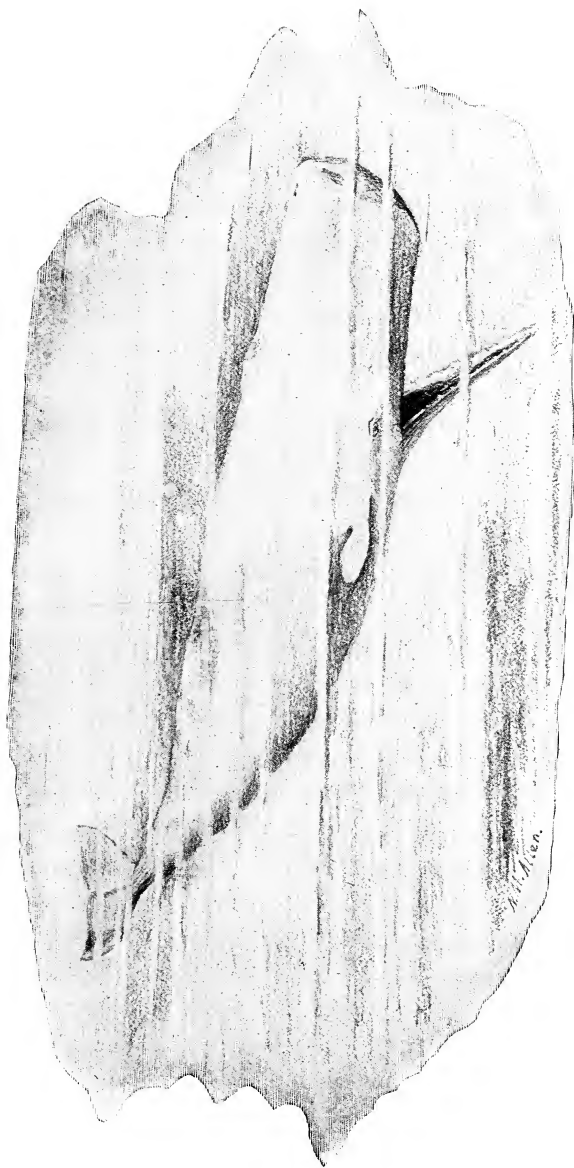
instance, published and accepted as a demonstration of the reality of the story of Jonah (which he had previously disbelieved), by M. Henri de Parville,* of Paris, a gentleman accustomed to weighing evidence, and of painstaking care in reaching conclusions.

After mentioning that dissection has shown that whales of forty feet in length have stomachs of about seven feet in diameter,† he relates the experience of James Bartley, a member of the crew of the steam-whaler *Star of the East*. On Aug. 25, 1891, a large sperm whale was wounded by a bomb-lance from one of her boats. The monster in his fury rushed forward and seized the boat in his jaws, crushing the middle section to fragments, the sailors jumping into the sea in all directions. The stern of the boat was thrown upward, and Bartley, who was steersman, leaped out; but the whale changed his position suddenly, so that the man alighted within his wide-open mouth. Bartley's shipmates saw the ponderous jaws close about him, and gave him up as lost.

In due time the whale was killed, and towed to the ship. The removal of the blubber occupied a day and a half. At last it occurred to the sailors to search the intestines of the whale for their lost shipmate. They

* Scientific editor of that eminent periodical, the *Journal des Débats*; March 14, 1896, pp. 539, 540, weekly edition.

† See Note 5.



A SPERM WHALE FEEDING.

cut open the vast stomach, and with great surprise beheld Bartley peacefully reclining within, unconscious, but still alive. He had been in the whale's stomach thirty-six hours. They drew him out, and laid him upon the deck, rubbed his limbs, and gave him brandy. His hands were purple, and he was smeared with the blood of his late host. In a short time he regained consciousness, but not his reason—being subject to the hallucination that he was being consumed in a furnace. (Though the temperature of whales is near 104° Fahr., the sailor's sensation of heat while in the whale's stomach would hardly have been so intense without an atmosphere amply supplied with oxygen, however vaporous it might also have been.) The sufferer's account of his experience was given by him as follows: "I remember very well," he said after his recovery, "from the moment that I jumped from the boat and felt my feet strike some soft substance. I looked up and saw a big-ribbed canopy of light pink and white descending over me, and the next moment I felt myself drawn downward feet first, and I realized that I was being swallowed by a whale. I was drawn lower and lower; a wall of flesh surrounded me and hemmed me in on every side, yet the pressure was not painful, and the flesh easily gave way like soft india-rubber before my slightest movement.

"Suddenly I found myself in a sack much larger than my body, but completely dark. I felt about me; and my hand came in contact with several fishes, some of which seemed to be still alive, for they squirmed in my fingers, and slipped back to my feet. Soon I felt a great pain in my head, and my breathing became more and more difficult. At the same time I felt a terrible heat; it seemed to consume me, growing hotter and hotter. My eyes became coals of fire in my head, and I believed every moment that I was going to be broiled [not *boiled*] alive. The horrible thought that I was condemned to perish in the belly of a whale tormented me beyond endurance, while at the same time the awful silence of the terrible prison weighed me down. I tried to rise, to move my arms and legs, to cry out. All action was now impossible, but my brain seemed abnormally clear; and with a full comprehension of my awful fate, I finally lost all consciousness."

The captain and crew of the *Star of the East* testify to the facts of this occurrence, as narrated. James Bartley was then about thirty-five years of age, a man of strong physique and great power of endurance. After the arrival of the steamer at Liverpool, Bartley had two or three recurrences of his hallucination of burning up, and was sent to a hospital in London. Subsequently he appears to have fully recovered his health.

Again, it is assumed that for his story to be true, Jonah must have been in the full possession of his faculties for all the three days, and that he occupied the time with that fine composition known as his prayer. The book itself nowhere gives support to these assumptions. Let us not read into the narrative more than is there, nor read it in any way different.

The story is in the third person, as though a scribe wrote it, perhaps from Jonah's recital. The book does not purport to be the composition of Jonah, only that certain expressions therein were made by him at certain periods of the several occurrences. Neither do we usually expect, when an individual is giving an account of his acts and words on a certain critical occasion, that the repetition will be without such development of the ideas and supplying of ellipses as may be necessary to complete the sense, thus rendering his acts and utterances intelligible to other persons. To Jonah and the people of his time his experience was a miracle; to God there is no miracle. There can be no deviation from the primal, generic ways of action in the universe; all that may appear so to man are merely the extreme notes in the divine harmony, — a few of the many possible resultants of natural forces opportunely and unusually combined. Some occurrences which were miracles to the people of past generations are in a degree comprehen-

sible to us, though one miraculous element in them will always be beyond our knowledge, at least until death shall remove the veil of the physical and admit us to full spiritual sight; this element being the convention of causes which God makes to be coincident with the need of their effect. But if we have gained a partial understanding of any ancient miracles, we have also come to hold firmly the truths which they aided in establishing.

Really, the passage called Jonah's "prayer" is rather his relation of his thanksgiving after deliverance; and it contains only two lines of his prayer, made within the whale. There may have been no more uttered. If Jonah were conscious, and had possession of his intellectual faculties during his entombment, are we to suppose that all the three days would be devoted to framing his prayer? Numerous reported experiences of drowning persons, rescued at the last moment and restored, show that a very brief time would be sufficient for the thoughts embraced in Jonah's prayer, and of the entire situation, including wicked Nineveh, to pass through his mind; indeed, a common expression of persons thus rescued is, "I thought of everything I had done in my life while going down that last time." Why should Jonah be required to spend three days in going through with that prayer? On the contrary, it is more in harmony with the book, and more reasonable to sup-

pose, that Jonah had an experience similar to that of a drowning person, thought his thoughts very quickly and intensely, then lapsed into unconsciousness.

The whale (if it were a whale) may have been thrown to shore by the violence of the storm-waves (as we know they sometimes are), perhaps having first been dashed on the sharp rocks, as a multitude of other whales have been; and then, in his death agony (in accordance with the usual physiological action in the whale), he ejected the unconscious castaway upon the beach.

So light an object as a man's body might have been driven higher and higher upon the shore by successive waves, as often happens in shipwrecks on a coast; while the huge beast, rolling in the surge, floated away with the receding tide, to be stranded, perhaps, on some shoal.

Jonah, reviving after a while in the pure air, would scarcely be expected to spend much time in looking about for the whale, and may not have discovered that his preserver was dead. He finds that it is now the third day since he was cast into the deep; and he seeks his home, and finally recovers from his unprecedented experience.

[NOTE 1.]

The allegorical treatment of the Book of Jonah, as relating to nations and peoples, is favorably illustrated by Kleinert's view: He sees in Jonah the nation with a prophetic call (Israel) in whom all

the nations of the earth shall be blessed. Nineveh represents the heathen world in its greatness and ignorance, the object of divine compassion. Israel seeks to evade its mission, and devotes itself to worldly pursuits (Jonah flees to Tarshish); but God punishes the nation by adversity (the storm), and by a captivity which threatens its very existence (Jonah swallowed by the sea-monster). When the nation cries to the Lord (Jonah's prayer), he delivers them (Jonah's escape from the monster); but their mission, still unaccomplished, remains the same. Repentant Nineveh shows how the Lord is found of those that sought him not, while he stretches out his hands to a rebellious people.

[NOTE 2.]

Swedenborg's Summary Exposition of the Internal Sense of the Book of Jonah, "Apocalypse Explained," 431, 538. Chapter I. — Concerning the conversion of the nations, which are Nineveh; that those who were of the Jewish nation were commanded to teach the Word to the nations round about, but that they would not, and that thus they alone kept the Word to themselves, 1-3; that knowledges began to perish with them, and that nevertheless they lived securely, 4-6; that the nations perceived that the state of the church was perverted with them on account of the loss of knowledges with the Jews, and that they would not communicate to others beyond themselves, 7-9; that they should reject those things which were of the Jewish nation, because they were falsified, in order that they might be saved, 10-13; that they should pray to the Lord for salvation, which was granted them, the falses from the Jewish nation being removed, 14-16.

Chapter I, 17, and chapter II. — A prophecy concerning the combats of the Lord with the hells, and concerning his most grievous temptations then, and concerning his state then; the three days and nights during which Jonah was in the bowels of the fish signify the whole duration of the combat with the hells, I., 17; II., 10.

Chapter III. — That the nations, hearing from the Word of God concerning their sins that they were about to perish after repentance, converted themselves, and that they were heard by the Lord and saved, 1-10.

Chapter IV. — That the Jewish nation was very wroth, because the nations were saved, 1-4; a representation of their wrath on that account, 5-11.

Also, "Arcana Cœlestia," 1188, 1709, by same author.

[NOTE 3.]

"Beyond doubt also," says a devout scholar, remarkable for both comprehensive views and analytical acumen, "both the original record itself, and the allusions made to it by our Lord, assume that the matters therein contained are to be taken in their literal verity; and not as fanciful representations or fabulous tales, but as actual facts in the divine procedure, did they carry the deep practical significance, alike for the present and the future, which is plainly attached to them in the Scriptures."

[NOTE 4.]

In such summary statements as those in the Book of Jonah, in the account of the entombment of Jesus, the Christ, and in other parts of the Scriptures, mention of time is not usually made exact. Our Lord was not in a morbid condition for three times twenty-four hours (that is, 72 hours), but he was wrapped in the cerements of the tomb *in* three days (that is, his entombment counted three diurnal dates); yet the statement of the time as given in the Gospels has not been hypercritically dwelt upon by any sceptic who has obtained respectable listeners: no more should exactness in the duration of Jonah's incarceration be insisted on. In ancient times there were neither watches nor clocks, while sun-dials, in any form, were rude, and the observations of the time of day inaccurate.

[NOTE 5.]

The *rorquals* (whales having folds — Norwegian) are marked by a dorsal fin, and longitudinal folds of the skin under the mouth, throat, and stomach, — permitting great expansion, especially in the humpback variety, in which the folds extend posteriorly more than half the length of the body. In fact, this species of the *Balænoptera* (the rorquals) have several capacious sacs, which together constitute the stomach, not all of which perform a strictly digestive function. Thus, Sir William Turner, President of the British Royal Society, in a paper read before that body in February, 1891, says, "The stomach of the lesser rorqual has five compartments, the first of which has not a digestive function."

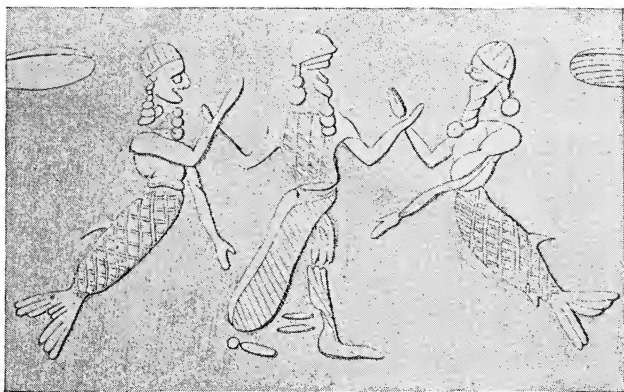
Bishop Jebb ("Sacred Literature," p. 178) holds that Jonah's place of refuge was not in the stomach proper of a whale, but in a cavity in its throat answering to the upper compartment of the stomach, which, according to several naturalists, has the necessary capacity. Captain Scoresby, the scientific whaler and author, asserts that it is sufficiently large to contain a merchant ship's jolly-boat full of men. This statement doubtless refers to the bowhead, the great whale of the Arctic Ocean, where the investigations of this reliable observer were chiefly made.

Whaling authorities state that the sperm whale has been known to attain a length of ninety feet or more, and the humpback to sixty feet.

PART V.

JONAH IN NINEVEH.





SUB-DEITIES OF THE CHALDEANS.

JONAH IN NINEVEH.*

IN the discussion of the question of the historicity of the Book of Jonah, two objections, urged against its verity at various times from the days of Lucian until now, have had weight with many scholars who find no difficulty in accepting as true the Bible record of miracles generally. These objections are : (1) The seeming lack of a sufficient reason for the unique miracle of Jonah's preservation in a great fish ; (2) The essential improbability of the instant,

* By H. Clay Trumbull, D.D., editor of *The Sunday School Times*. First published in *The Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. xi., Part I.

reverent heed of an entire people to the simple religious message of an unknown visitor from an enemy's country.

A peculiarity of Bible miracles that differentiates them from all mere myths and fables and "lying wonders" of any age is their entire reasonableness as miracles; their clear exhibit of supernaturalness without unnaturalness. When, for instance, God would bring his people out of Egypt with a mighty hand, he does not tell Moses to wave his rod above their heads in order that, after the fashion of stories in the "Arabian Nights," they should be transported through the air and set down in Canaan; but he brings them on foot to the borders of Yam Suph, where he tells Moses to stretch out his rod over the sea, in order that its waters may divide and make a pathway for the Hebrews; and again to stretch it out in order that the waters may return for the deluging of the Egyptians.

So, again, the ten "strokes," or miraculous "plagues," wrought for the bringing of Pharaoh to release God's captive people, are successive strokes at the gods of Egypt, beginning with a stroke at the popular river-god, and passing on and up to a stroke at the royal sun-god in the heavens, and terminating with a stroke at the first-born, or priestly representative of the gods, in every household of Egypt, "from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon the throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill; and all the [consecrated]

first-born of cattle." The miraculous strokes are, in the light of later Egyptian disclosures, seen to be a reasonable, although a supernatural, exhibition of the supremacy of the God of the Hebrews over the boasted gods of Egypt, rather than a reasonless display of divine power.

Similarly the miracles of the four Gospels differ from those of the Apocryphal Gospels in the simplicity of their reasonable supernaturalness, as contrasted with the irrational unnaturalness of their spurious imitations. In the one case, the miracle is a reasonable exercise of supernatural power for the increase of food, for the healing of disease, for the restoration of (natural) life, for the quieting of the disturbed elements of nature. In the other case, the miracle is a silly marvel of making clay figures walk or fly, and of killing naughty boys with a word or a wish.

Where, in the Old Testament or the New, except in the Book of Jonah, is there such a seemingly unnecessary miracle as the saving a man's life by having him swallowed in a fish, instead, say, of having the vessel that carried him driven back by contrary winds to the place of its starting? Where else is there a story of the instant turning of a great multitude from self-seeking to God-seeking, by the words of a single strange speaker, without even the intervention of an obvious miracle in enforcement of the speaker's message, as at the time of

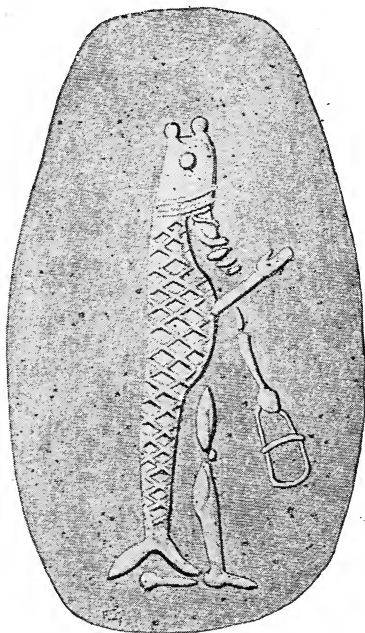
Belshazzar's feast, or at the Day of Pentecost? Is it, indeed, to be wondered at, in this view of the case, that a writer like Professor Cheyne should say concerning the historicity of the Book of Jonah: "From a purely literary point of view it has been urged that 'the marks of a story [of an imaginary story] are as patent in the Book of Jonah as in any of the tales of the "Thousand and One Nights;"'" and again, that "the greatest of the improbabilities [in this case] is a moral one; can we conceive of a large heathen city being converted by an obscure foreign prophet?"

Just here it is well to ask if there is anything in the modern disclosures of Assyrian life and history that would seem to render the marvellous element in the story of Jonah more reasonable, and the marvellous effect of his preaching at Nineveh more explicable and natural. And it seems to me that certain well-known facts in these disclosures have not been brought into their fair relations with reference to this question.

Prominent among the divinities of ancient Assyria, as shown by the monuments, was Dagan, a creature part man and part fish. The divinity was in some instances represented as an upright figure, with the head of a fish above the head of a man, the open mouth of the fish forming a mitre as the man's sacred head-dress, and the feet of a man extending below the tail of the fish. In other cases,

the body of a man was at right-angles to the conjoined body of a fish. Images of this fish-god have been found guarding the entrance to the palace and temple in the ruins of Nineveh, and they appear upon ancient Babylonian seals in a variety of forms.* The name Dagan is found in the cuneiform inscriptions at an early date. Tiglath-pileser I. mentions an ancient ruler of Assyria under the name of Ishme-Dagan, who preceded him by six hundred and forty-one years, which would indicate a period of about 1840 B.C.; and another Ishme-Dagan, a Babylonian king, lived still earlier than the Assyrian ruler.

That this fish-god Dagan was an object of reverent worship in early Babylon and Assyria is clear from the monuments. Berosus, a Babylonian historian, writing



BROKEN FIGURE OF MAN-FISH.

* See Layard's "Nineveh and its Remains," II., 353f.; "Nineveh and Babylon," 292-295, 301f.

in the fourth century before our era, records the early traditions concerning the origin of this worship. According to the various fragments of Berosus preserved in later historical writers, the very beginning of civilization in Chaldea and Babylonia was under the direction of a personage, part man and part fish, who came up out of the sea. According to the account of this tradition given from Berosus by Apollodorus, "the whole body of the animal was like



THE "DAGON" OF SCRIPTURE.

that of a fish, and had under a fish's head another head, and also feet below, similar to those of a man, subjoined to the fish's tail. His voice, too, and language were articulate and human; and a representation of him is preserved even to this day. This being used to con-

verse with men in the daytime, but took no food at that season;* and he gave them an insight into letters and sciences and every kind of art. He taught them to construct houses, to found temples, to compile laws, and explained to them the principles of geometrical knowledge. He made them distinguish the seeds of the earth, and showed them how to collect fruits. In short, he instructed

* See Book of Bel and the Dragon, in the Apocryphal Old Testament.
— ED.

them in everything which could tend to soften manners and humanize mankind. From that time, so universal were his instructions, nothing material has been added by way of improvement. When the sun set, it was the custom of this being to plunge again into the sea, and abide all night in the deep; for he was amphibious." Berosus also records that from time to time, ages apart, other beings of like nature with this first great teacher came up out of the sea with fresh instructions for mankind; and that each one of these avatars, or incarnations, marked a new epoch, and the supernatural messenger bore a new name. So it would seem to be clear that, in all those days of Israel's history within which the Book of Jonah can fairly be assigned, the people of Nineveh were believers in a divinity who from time to time sent messages to them by a personage who rose out of the sea, as part fish and part man.* This being so, is there not a perceptible reasonableness or logical consistency of movement in the narrated miracle of Jonah in the fish, and of the wonderful success of the fish-ejected Jonah as a preacher in the Assyrian capital?

What better heralding, as a divinely sent messenger to Nineveh, could Jonah have had, than to be thrown up out of the mouth of a great fish, in the presence of witnesses, say on the coast of Phœnicia, where the fish-god was a favorite object of worship? Such an incident would have

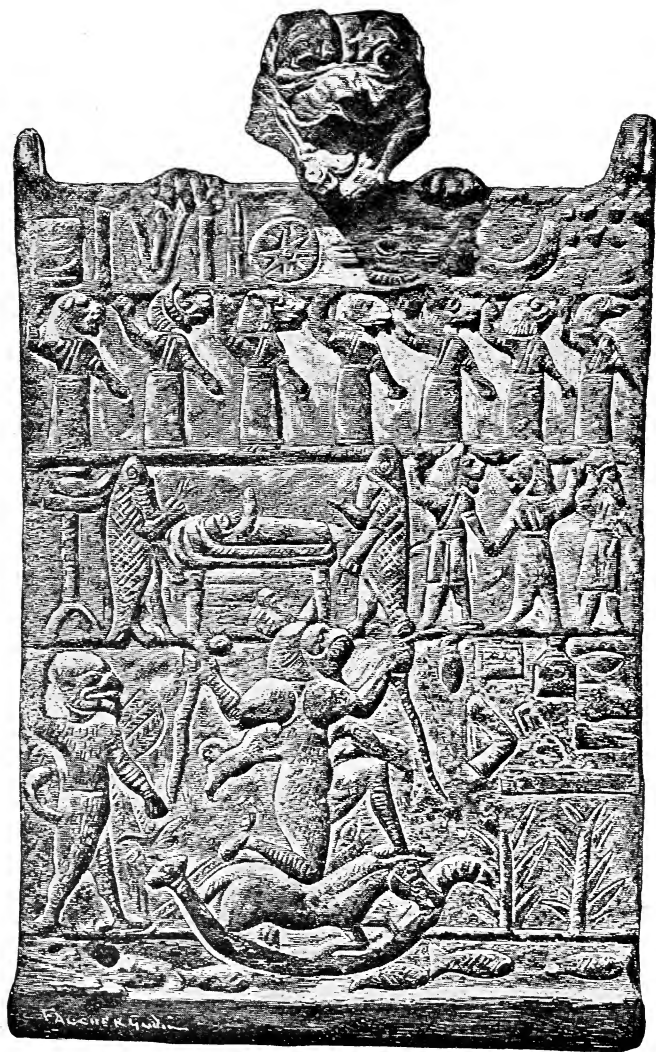
* See Note 1, at close of this article.

inevitably aroused the mercurial nature of Oriental observers, so that a multitude would be ready to follow the seemingly new avatar of the fish-god, proclaiming the story of his uprising from the sea, as he went on his mission to the city where the fish-god had its very centre of worship. And who would wonder that when it was heard in Nineveh that the new prophet among them had come from the very mouth of a fish in the sea to bring them a divinely sent warning,* all the people, "from the greatest of them even to the least of them," should be ready to heed the warning, and to take steps to avert the impending doom proclaimed by him.†

In short, if the Book of Jonah is to be looked upon as a veritable history, it is clear, in the light of Assyrian records and Assyrian traditions, that there was a sound reason for having Jonah swallowed by a fish, in order to his coming up out of a fish; and that the recorded sudden and profound alarm of the people of an entire city at his warning was most natural, as a result of the coincidence of this miracle with their religious beliefs and expectations. Hence these two stock arguments against the historicity of the Book of Jonah

* See Note 2.

† The Bible story of the repentance of a whole people, and of their signs of repentance at the call of their king, is entirely in accord with the historical records of Oriental peoples and sovereigns, in cases where the ruler was moved by fear or grief.



TWO MAN-FISH PRIESTS.

no longer have the force that they have seemed to possess.

There is another point in the record of Berosus that has a possible bearing on the story of Jonah at Nineveh. Berosus gives the name of the Assyrian fish-god as "Oannes," while he mentions the name "Odacon" as that of one of the avatars of Oannes. Now, as the name Dagan appears frequently in the Assyrian records from their earlier dates, and no trace has been found in them of the name "Oannes," or anything like it, the question suggests itself, Is there in this name, Oannes, any reference to Jonah as the supposed manifestation of the fish-god himself?

While "Oannes" is not the precise equivalent of the name "Jonah," it is a form that might naturally have been employed by Berosus while writing in Greek, if he desired to give an equivalent of "Jonah." And if it were a literal fact that a man called "Yonah" had come up out of the very mouth of a fish in the sea, claiming to be a messenger of the great God to the people of Nineveh, and had been accepted by king and people accordingly, is it not reasonable to suppose that Berosus, writing after that event, would connect the name Jonah with the primal divinity of Nineveh? And is there not in these disclosures of the Assyrian monuments, and of the later Babylonian historian, incidental

proof of the naturalness of the narrative of Jonah at Nineveh, whether that narrative be looked upon as a plain record of facts, or as an inspired story of what might have been facts?

It would certainly seem to be true that, if God desired to impress upon all the people of Nineveh the authenticity of a message from himself, while leaving to themselves the responsibility of a personal choice as to obeying or disregarding his message, he could not have employed a fitter method than by sending that message to them in a way calculated to meet their most reverent and profound conceptions of a divinely authorized messenger.* And this divine concession, as it may



A GOD-FISH (OANNES).

* See Note 3.

be called, to the needs and aspirations of a people of limited religious training, would be in accordance with all that we know of God's way of working among men; as shown, for example, in his meeting of Joseph in Egypt through the divining-cup, and of the Chaldeans through their searching of the stars.

In addition to this trace of the name Jonah as connected with Assyria in the writings of Berosus, the preservation of that name at the ruins of Nineveh would seem to indicate or to confirm a historic basis for this connection. It has been customary to account for that name at that site by the carrying of it thither by the Muhammadans in the Middle Ages. But how was it that the early Muhammadans accurately located that site, which had been so utterly lost to human knowledge that when Xenophon's army passed the ruins of the capital of Assyria, a century before Berosus, no trace of the name or fame of Nineveh as Nineveh seemed to remain there.* As soon, however, as modern discoverers unearthed the mound that had for long centuries — perhaps from the days of Nineveh's destruction — been known by the name of Neby Yunas, they found beneath it the ruined palaces of kings of Nineveh. It is possible that the name "Yunas," † or "Jonah," at this site, was a survival of the tradition that a divinity of that name

* See Note 4.

† Jonas.

there appeared to the Ninevites, as indicated by Berosus. It is a well-known fact that the name of a local divinity adheres with wonderful persistency to its locality in the East.

[NOTE 1.]

The lion and the eagle, the forms which chiefly occupy the attention among the architectural remains of Nineveh and Babylon from their number and size, are conceptions of a later period than the man-fish forms — these belonging to the age of the founding of the empire. They are generally of less ambitious workmanship, and usually show imperfection from decay, and are obscured by the work of the later generations. The eagle, the lion, and the bull, being better suited to set forth the personal glory of the monarch, have been principally used in monumental decoration. The man-fish forms, on the contrary, rarely appear in works reared by a monarch, or to his memory, having an almost exclusively religious signification. Consideration of all such figures and their relative position shows that the religious sentiment of the people was closely bound up with them, even to a late period in the existence of Nineveh. — ED.

[NOTE 2.]

It is not said in the Bible record that Jonah spoke in the name of *Jehovah* to the people of Nineveh, although it is said that it was the “word of *Jehovah*” which came to him as he was sent thither. (Jonah i. 1; iii. 1.)

[NOTE 3.]

A native fragment of the legend of Oannes from an Accadian work has been accidentally preserved in a bilingual reading-

book compiled for the use of Semitic students of Accadian, as follows : —

“To the waters their god has returned ; into the house of his repose the protector has descended.

The wicked weaves spells, but the sentient one grows not old.
A wise people repeated his wisdom.

The unwise and the slave [*literally*, person], the most valued of his master, forgot him.

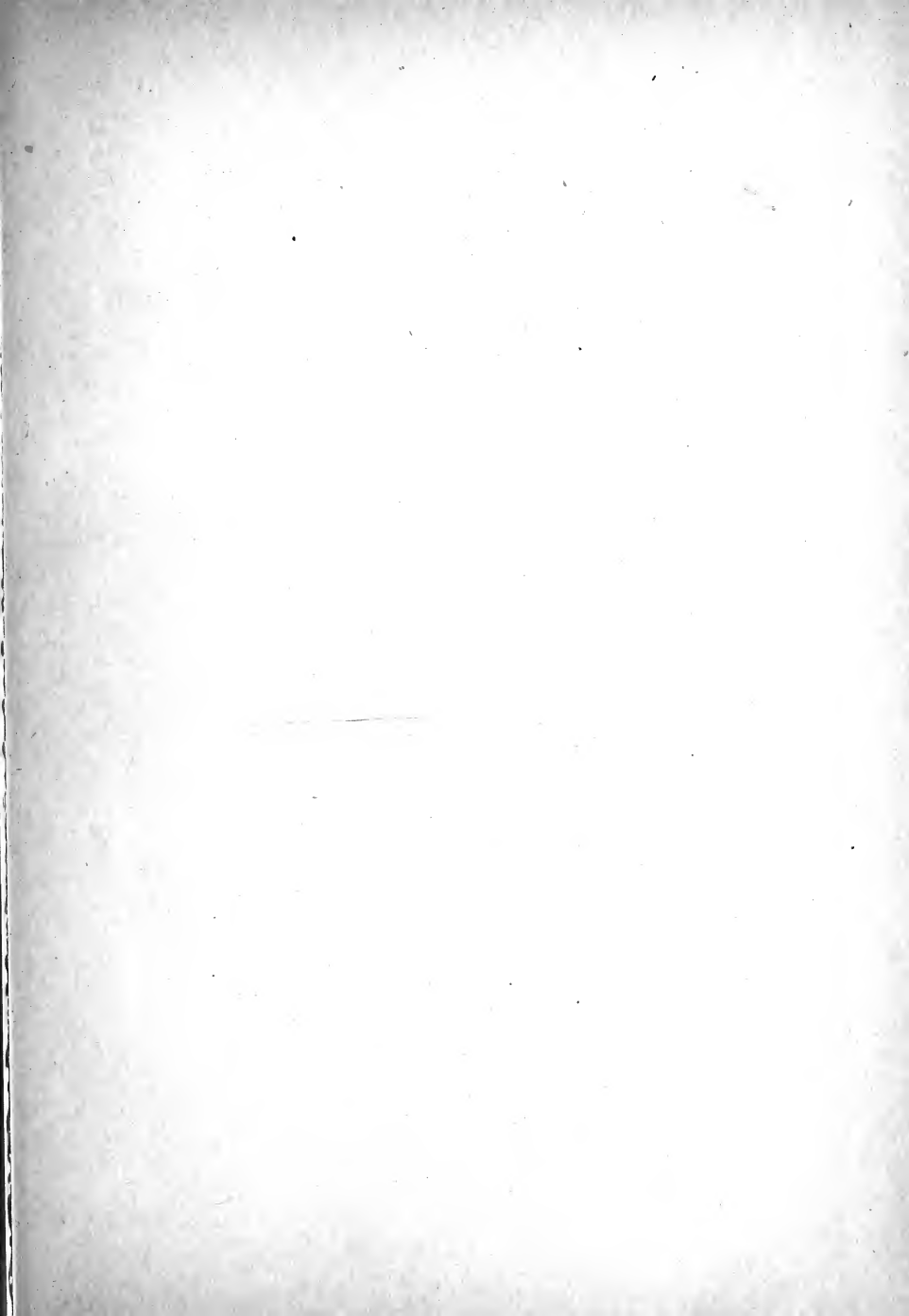
There was need of him, and he restored his decrees.” (See Sayce’s *Origin and Growth of Religions*, p. 131.)

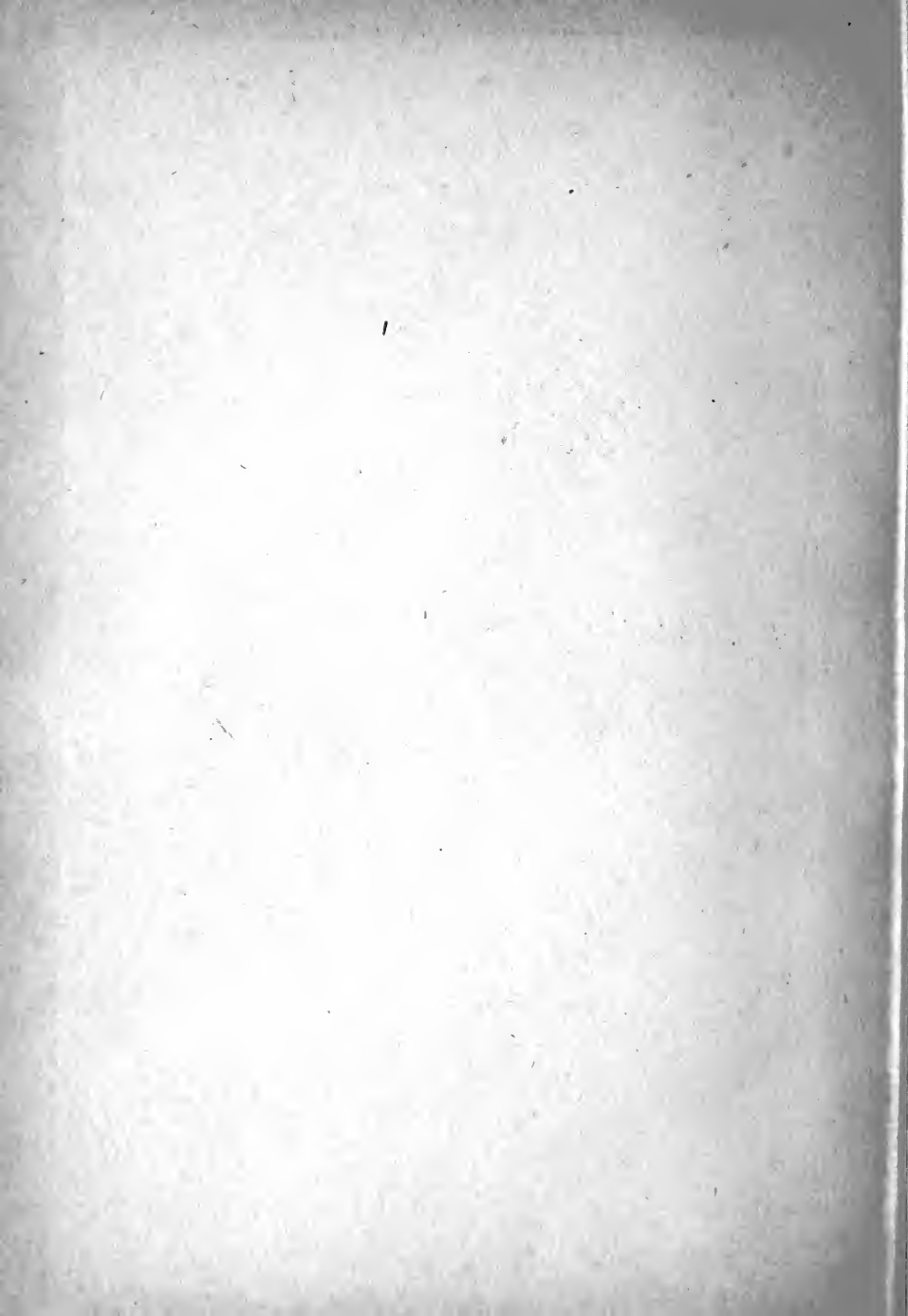
[NOTE 4.]

See *Anabasis*, Book III., § 4. Herodotus, at an earlier date than Xenophon, speaks of the Tigris as “the river upon which the town of Nineveh formerly stood” (*History*, Book I., § 193); this was (say) a century and a half after the destruction of the capital of Assyria. The idea that Muhammadans or Christians were enabled by their instinct, or through a miraculous attainment of knowledge, a dozen centuries after that time, to locate in the desert the site of the city where Jonah preached, is more improbable than anything in the Book of Jonah.

NOTA BENE.

The foregoing article does not embrace Dr. Trumbull’s final words on the subject ; which, together with his notes and numerous references to authorities, are to be found in his little volume, “Light on the Story of Jonah,” published by John D. Wattles & Co., Philadelphia. Price, 20 cents.





85
1605

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 029 789 053 0